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ABSTRACT

This manual provides suggestions for workshops for teaching parents, youth leaders, and teachers to teach critical television viewing skills. It is based on materials produced by the Critical TV Viewing Skills Project sponsored by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory. The manual contains an overview of the project and a discussion of children and television. A section on general suggestions for training adults and getting ready for the workshop contains information on planning, selecting and defining objectives, desirable participant outcomes, types of training activities, a sample outline for a workshop, a workshop planning checklist, and a workshop evaluation form. There are specific suggestions and sample activity scripts for training general audiences, teachers, parents, and youth leaders. The appendixes include a review of the research, resource lists, and discussions of how to use materials produced by the Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) for teaching critical television viewing skills. (MKM)

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# TRAINING MANUAL

## For Teaching Critical TV Viewing Skills

Developed by the

Division of Learning and Media Research
Southwest Educational Development Laboratory

Austin, Texas 78701

under contract with the
U.S. Office of Education, DHEW*
Washington, D.C. 20202

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# PREFACE

The presence of television in our lives has received increased attention in recent years, with many people expressing concern over its possible negative influence. Children who cannot distinguish reality from fantasy watch TV for an astonishing number of hours, and often without adult supervision. One response to this problem has been to criticize television—and the critics have been many. Some condemn TV's use of violence, exploitation of sex, and its emphasis on bland programming. Others criticize the frequency and type of TV commercials — especially on programs directed at children who may not understand the persuasive interest of the messages.

Parents say they feel vaguely guilty about the amount of TV that their children (and they, themselves) watch. Yet they are uncertain what to do about it. Teachers express concern that students spend so much time watching TV that they fall behind in learning basic skills. Youth leaders wonder how to involve children in constructive activities that provide a structure for dealing productively with TV. All are looking for help, information, and suggestions.

Criticism need not be the only approach to the problem of TV's overwhelming impact on the lives of America's children. There is another strategy and it forms the basis upon which this manual has been developed. It is to *help* the viewers of television to become thoroughly acquainted with the techniques, the content, and the structure of television, while encouraging them to take a more active viewing role. The staff of SEDL believes that television has an unrealized potential for making constructive contributions to the lives of children. The purpose of training adults who may then train children in critical TV viewing skills is to help them all make *positive* use of television.

This manual has been developed to help these three groups — parents, teachers and youth leaders — to focus on the issues, and to learn strategies and skills, and to provide activities to help the children with whom they interact. These adults, in turn, may have an impact on the lives of television's most vulnerable audience — children.

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# *INTRODUCTION*

This **Training Manual** has been developed to provide information and ideas for training adults in critical TV viewing skill awareness so they may, in turn, teach these skills to children. Some of the information is for general use, and other sections are aimed at specific audiences, i.e., teachers, parents, and youth leaders.

Accepting the premise that it would be impossible, or at best difficult, to change children's TV viewing habits except over a prolonged period of time and contact, the SEDL staff determined that these skills could best be taught by those persons who have sustained contact with children — parents, teachers, and youth leaders. Realizing, in addition, that it would be difficult to reach large groups of these people, the decision was made to offer training to leaders at national meetings. These leaders could, in turn, train others in their organizations in developing critical TV viewing skills with children. The **Training Manual** was developed with this objective in mind.

The **Training Manual** is organized into six sections. Both the *Foreword* and *Introduction* express the need for development of critical TV viewing skills in children and explain the attempt to meet this need by training teachers, parents, and youth leaders. Further explanation of the manual is given in *How to Use This Manual*. *An Overview of the Project* discusses the background and goals of the Critical TV Viewing Skills Project. The section *Children and TV* point out facts about television programming, its impact, and ways children relate to it. The section on *General Training Helps* gives suggestions for training adults, preparing workshops, and selecting and defining objectives. It explains the activity scripts which are brief outlines of workshop activities for training leaders of different organizations, and includes sample evaluation forms.

The *Appendices* contain resource lists of books, periodicals, and other materials intended to provide background information for trainers and to enrich learning for students. A review of the literature on TV and children is also included, as well as descriptions and order forms for available Critical TV Viewing Skills materials developed by Southwest Educational Development Laboratory for elementary-age children.

# *HOW TO USE THIS MANUAL*

This **Training Manual** is designed to be used by those who provide training to parents, teachers, or youth leaders. This training may take one or more of the following forms:

1. **presenting** information about critical TV viewing skills to a group of people,
2. **leading** a discussion about critical TV viewing skills,
3. **teaching** people techniques for applying critical TV viewing skills,
4. **teaching** people how to use the SEDL materials and how to use TV itself as a resource, and
5. **organizing** efforts to help a group make its concerns known to a variety of agencies.

You may, in fact, have responsibility for doing all five of these tasks at one time or another. This manual is intended to help you with each of these tasks.

Because the needs and strategies of teachers, parents, and youth leaders differ somewhat, there are separate sections of this manual designed for each group. In addition, there are general training guides and activities for any group.

The manual is intended as a resource and guide. It is not designed to be read aloud to a group. Rather, workshop leaders will need to select portions to be used, and prepare their presentations in advance. Activities may be modified, added to, or deleted in order to develop designs that are most appropriate for particular groups. An activity that was designed for youth leaders might be effective with parents, too. Use of the entire manual will provide as many options as possible for training others in critical TV viewing skills.

As a workshop leader you will need to become familiar with the philosophy of the Critical TV Viewing Skills Project, the materials that are available, and literature on the effects of TV viewing. This manual contains three main sections: background information, workshop guides, and appendices with resources. Read all the sections carefully before planning a workshop. Then you can tailor a workshop to meet the needs of a particular group.

# *AN OVERVIEW OF THE CRITICAL TV VIEWING SKILLS PROJECT*

The Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) under contract with the U.S. Office of Education has developed a program designed to teach critical television viewing skills to elementary school students.

**The program focuses on eight primary television viewing skills:**

1. **distinguishing program elements, such as music, special effects, costumes, settings, color, etc.**
2. **making judicious use of viewing time,**
3. **understanding psychological implications of advertising,**
4. **distinguishing fact from fiction,**
5. **recognizing and appreciating differing views,**
6. **understanding content of dramatic presentations, public affairs, news, and other programming,**
7. **understanding style of dramatic presentations, public affairs, news, and other program formats, and**
8. **understanding the relation between television programming and the printed word.**

There are two major reasons why it is important to teach students to be critical television viewers. First, students spend many hours each day watching television. Second, a substantial body of evidence indicates that television content influences the information, attitudes, and behavior of television viewers, especially students. This evidence shows that the effects of what is learned from television are not necessarily neutral; sometimes the effects are beneficial and sometimes they are alarmingly negative.

The impact of what is learned from television is especially great for students. Television provides information about many areas of life which are important to a student's development. A student can learn many social skills and values from television programs and commercials. These values may be desirable or undesirable, and may range from aggressive behavior to sex roles. The two problems involved in students' learning from television are 1) they often do not understand the intent or the message of the program, and 2) they tend to have difficulty separating reality from fantasy or what is relevant to their lives from what is not relevant to their lives. As a result, children often learn different things from television than parents and teachers would wish for them to learn.

Therefore, ideas, models, and approaches need to be developed to make television a positive influence in students' lives. This can be done by using what is known about the effects of television or children and what is known about the methods of modifying its effects to develop materials, procedures and techinques for teaching students to be critical television consumers. Students can be taught to evaluate whether or not television content is real, whether or not it is relevant to their lives, whether or not it reflects reality, and to understand motivations and psychological implications. These skills can be taught in ways similar to those used to teach students to evaluate the content of other media such as literature or drama. The goal of teaching children these skills is to reduce the undesirable consequences of television viewing on students and to maximize the potentially positive learning opportunities.

# *CHILDREN AND TV*

## *Did you know that . . .*

- ★ **More American households have TV sets than have indoor plumbing.**
- ★ **Most children are regular television viewers by the age of three.**
- ★ **Some preschool children would rather watch television than play with their schoolmates.**
- ★ **Children younger than 8 years of age have difficulty telling the difference between TV commercials and programs.**
- ★ **Television greatly expands children's awareness of the world around them.**
- ★ **There are more TV sets than people in the United States.**
- ★ **Children of the television era are more knowledgeable than the children of previous generations in a variety of topics including symbolic and visual communication, social issues, and historical events.**
- ★ **Children gain most of their occupational knowledge from television**
- ★ **Only six out of ten characters portrayed on TV programs have identifiable jobs.**
- ★ **Students, especially young students, can be negatively influenced by television.**

The negative effects of TV on children are due largely to three components of the television-viewer interaction. First, television is a communication medium and thus susceptible to distortion. The events, characters, and actions portrayed, whether in a news program, a documentary, a comedy, or a dramatc presentation, can never be totally real and realistic, but rather are part of an unavoidably distorted and abridged presentation of reality. Second, television is a commercial industry in America and thus must be responsive to commercial pressures. While many television professionals would prefer to use the industry as a vehicle to bring a variety of enriching programs into people's lives, they must contend with the economic necessity of attracting a viewing audience through programs which appeal to a large cross section of people. Third, young children, because of their incomplete cognitive development, often fail to interpret portrayals in television programs and commercials realistically. For example, young children infer that a television character did something bad if something bad happens to the character as a consequence. Also, children are unsophisticated regarding different formats and persuasive techniques used in television advertising.

Students' critical viewing and evaluation of television content is fundamental if television is to be a positive contributor to their lives. By comparing television with other sources of information, students can be more sophisticated consumers of television.

Television can and should be an educational resource. It can be a window opening to the world. It can introduce students to places far and near; events past, present and future; and the ideas of many peoples. The primary objective of the SEDL program is to enable elementary school students, through their teachers and parents and through youth organization leaders, to benefit from television.

A project to teach critical television viewing skills must utilize people who not only have contact with elementary school students, but who have a *sustained* contact with students. Parents and teachers are the primary persons who have long-term contacts with elementary school students. They could, over a long period of time, help to enable and encourage students to become more aware and knowledgeable, to analyze, and to develop a more realistic understanding of television programming. Therefore, the main emphasis of the SEDL project is on teaching and training adults — teachers, educators, parents, and youth leaders — who can in turn work with students over a long period of time.

# *GENERAL SUGGESTIONS FOR TRAINING ADULTS*

*(If you already have experience in teaching adults, and feel comfortable in that role, you may want to skip this section.)*

There are certain philosophies to keep in mind when teaching or training adults. Most adults are realistic and learn best when they know what the objectives are. Because of their varied experience and knowledge in diverse areas, adults have a sense of what is workable and what is not. Learning is facilitated when adults can associate new material to their past experiences. If the material presented is related to a job, the home, or volunteer experience, it will be easier for the mature student to remember and accept more readily.

Adults come to learning situations voluntarily. They are not a captive audience like school children. They are not likely to return for continuing training if it isn't interesting, informative, and practical. Adults are busy people with many activities and responsibilities competing for their time. Often they are tired when they come to a training session. Therefore, a comfortable environment is a necessity for adult learners. They appreciate teaching methods and techniques which provide a change of pace or add interest and humor. In fact, adult learning is accelerated in an informal, friendly climate.

When compared to children as students, adults are **more** likely to have set ideas and are **less willing** to adopt new methods. Often they are intolerant of learning theories for the theory's sake, and of performing tasks which seem to them "busy work." Adults want to see their new knowledge applied to the objectives and theories applied to practical problems. They learn better by "doing" rather than from what they hear, see, or read.

Most importantly, adults are self motivated learners and learn more successfully at their own pace. They are accustomed to being treated as mature responsible human beings with valuable ideas and experiences. Their learning is enhanced when they can share their ideas and experience with the leader and the group. Adults are exciting students because they ultimately help the leader teach, and they share their knowledge enthusiastically with others.

## *REMEMBER WHEN TRAINING ADULTS . . .*

1. **Be as clear as possible about the objectives of the workshop.**
   Don't make the participants guess what they are supposed to be learning.
2. **Always be respectful of the people you are training.**
   Most people are doing the best they can with whatever resources they have.
3. **Give them credit for being competent people.**
   Don't talk "down" to your audience. Remember that most who attend your workshop are (1) eager to learn and (2) possibly experts in other fields.
4. **Acknowledge their physical needs.**
   Provide comfortable chairs, adequate ventilation, and good lighting. Provide coffee or other light refreshments throughout the session or allow for breaks at least every 1½-2 hours. Include activities which build enthusiasm and morale. Vary the pace to prevent boredom and fatigue.
5. **Start and finish on time.**
   Adults have schedules to keep and many demands on their time.
6. **Give them plenty of opportunitites to contribute their ideas.**
   It is very difficult for adults to sit and listen for an extended period without getting bored or impatient.
7. **Give them credit for their experience.**
   A participant may say something with which you disagree. Make sure that your response **affirms** the person who made the comment without creating dissent. For example, a participant may say:
   *"I can't be a policeman in my house. I'm not going to hang around all the time to make sure my kids don't watch certain TV programs!"*
   An effective response might be:
   *"It's hard to be aware of what our kids are watching all the time. I would encourage you to be as involved with their TV viewing habits as you have the time and the energy to be. Hopefully this training will offer you some suggestions that won't impose a big time burden on you."*
   Or a teacher in your workshop may say:
   *"My day is so jam-packed with state and district requirements I don't have time for any more things."*
   Your reply should acknowledge the teacher's frustration and at the same time encourage openness to your ideas.
   *"We're all aware of the heavy demands being placed on teachers these days. And most parents really appreciate the job teachers do under the circumstances. This workshop is simply going to offer some ideas and materials that teachers may or may not choose to use. I do think some of the suggestions for Critical TV Viewing Skills can be used in the lessons you're teaching now without changing goals you've set for your students. Whatever you decide, I'll trust your judgment as a professional to know whether or not a particular suggestion is right for you and your class."*
8. **Build the participant's sense of competence.**
   Under no circumstances should someone feel more inadequate after training!

# *GETTING READY FOR THE WORKSHOP*

## *PLANNING*

As leader of a workshop you will want everything to go as smoothly as possible. The most important element in a successful workshop is **PLANNING**. There are several questions which should be answered before designing the workshop. They are almost the same as the traditional questions journalism students answer when writing a lead for a story: WHO? WHAT? WHEN? WHERE? WHY? HOW?

**1. WHO are the participants in the workshop going to be?**

This is an important question for obvious reasons. A group of parents may have different concerns from a group of teachers. Although both groups will be interested in ways to work with children, they usually approach their work from different perspectives. Also, organizations which work with youth have different program emphases. Workshops can and should be tailored to the specific needs of the group attending. Select activities and examples that are directly applicable to the needs and goals of the audience. This does not mean that some of the activities are not appropriate for one group or the other, rather that the impact of a workshop can be increased by making it directly applicable to the lives of the participants.

In addition to asking **WHO** will be attending your workshop, you need to know how many participants you will have. Many activities are designed for small **or** large groups, but not for both. You will also need to adjust the style of presentation somewhat depending on the number attending. An informal conversational style may be perfect for a group of ten, but it could easily fall flat with a group of ninety. Conversely, a formal, highly structured presentation might be effective with a group of ninety, but seem terribly stuffy to the group of ten.

**2. WHAT do you hope to accomplish with this workshop?**

This is one of the most critical questions you must ask yourself when planning a workshop. To a large extent the answer to this question will determine everything else you do. This important question will be addressed further in the section entitled, SELECTING OBJECTIVES. Be sure to read it carefully.

Why is this question so important? It is important because it will force you to ask yourself two other important questions, *"What should I do?"* and *"Why am I going to do it?"*

Often a workshop is less effective than it could be because appropriate objectives were not chosen. For example, a workshop for teachers which focuses on the SUZIE STORIES and ways they could be used in a language arts class might be very well executed. Yet, it would not be effective with a group of youth leaders because the objective selected does not meet their needs. In general, select objectives, not activities. Once you have an objective clearly in mind you can design an activity that meets it.

**3. WHEN will the workshop be held?**

Perhaps you are planning a series of workshops on several aspects of TV viewing and its impact on children. Will you choose to hold the sessions the same night of the week for four consecutive weeks? Or will your target audience respond better to a Saturday workshop which lasts from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.? The time of day chosen for the workshop is important. If you are working with teachers after school hours, a 45 minute lecture is likely to put some of your audience to sleep. This would be a good time to use short activities that require movement and active participation. This same principle holds for evening meetings with any group. Consider the work schedules and general leisure activities of your group before deciding WHEN to hold the workshop. For instance, a church group might be accustomed to setting aside Wednesday evenings for administrative or educational meetings. So they would probably be available on any fifth Wednesday. However, sports minded parents, teachers, or youth leaders would probably not give up a chance to see the home team play in order to attend a workshop on Teaching Critical TV Viewing Skills. If you are an invited leader for a workshop planned by someone else, the WHEN will be up to them.

In either case, it is very important to know **HOW MUCH TIME** is available to present the materials. In order to design the workshop, you will need to know the exact amount of time allotted. You may be invited to a meeting which is scheduled to last for an hour and a half, only to find on arriving that your portion of the meeting is limited to 30 minutes. On the other hand, if you are planning the workshop for a group, you can determine how much time you need to effectively present the ideas and objectives, then divide that time into segments which are easy to work with. For example, a four hour workshop could be presented on a Saturday morning or in four one hour sessions on consecutive evenings.

**4. WHERE will you hold the workshop?**

Sometimes the WHERE depends on the answer to WHEN. For instance, local school facilities may be available in the evening, but are rarely open for public meetings during school hours. A youth camp site may be available and free, but it wouldn't be too comfortable in the middle of winter.

Considerations when choosing WHERE to have a workshop might include your expected activity needs. Will you need space for exhibits? Is it a large room, big enough to split your participants into small work groups? Or are there adjacent rooms for separate meetings? Important things to check for are the lighting, ventilation, acoustics, electric outlets, and whether or not a microphone or sound system is available in the room.

What are the **space limitations** of the workshop setting you choose? Make sure that you know ahead of time the amount and kind of space you will have in which to conduct your workshop. If the activities planned require participants to move freely around the room and you find yourself in an auditorium with fixed seating, it may be difficult to adjust your plan at the last moment. It is also awkward when workshop plans include films or other visual presentations and the room assigned has no equipment, no electrical outlet, and is the size of a large closet!

**5. WHY are people coming to that workshop?**

What are their reasons? An important issue which affects the success of any workshop is whether or not the participants **choose** to be there. Many teachers are required to attend in-service meetings. Enthusiasm at such sessions is not likely to be high. As the workshop leader, you should try to find out whether the participants will be attending voluntarily. Often PTA meetings are scheduled as business meetings. Many parents come to these meetings unaware of any program being planned. They may not be interested in the program subject at all. Sometimes adults attend functions of this type out of a sense of duty. In this situation there is not likely to be much active participation. In these instances and within some organizations, you will need to select your activities with care. At some conferences workshops are well advertised and members choose to attend in advance. A workshop full of eager participants who **choose** to come should be a joy to lead.

**6. HOW will you finance the workshop?**

For some groups who have no budget for extra training or adult education, this is an important consideration. If funds are not available, try to choose a location where no rental fee is charged. Ask for volunteers to provide refreshments. Borrow audio visual equipment or choose some other method of presentation. Sometimes a small fee might be charged participants to cover costs of materials, room rent, etc.

**7. HOW flexible can you be as a workshop leader?**

*Anyone who has had much experience in working with groups of people will tell you to expect the unexpected.* **Be flexible** is the byword. It is important to develop the ability to scrap all or part of a plan if it becomes necessary, and to carry on the training in a completely different way to accomplish your goals. It is better to have alternate plans than to flounder. The "alternate plan" is useful for times when the audio-visual equipment breaks down and there's no possibility for repair, when the local TV crew comes to film your large workshop on the day you assign participants to work in independent groups, or when the workshop attendance swells to 150 and you are prepared for only forty.

# *SELECTING AND DEFINING OBJECTIVES*

For the purposes of this training manual, an **OBJECTIVE** is defined as a statement which tells: **WHO** is going to learn **WHAT** within a certain period of **TIME** and **HOW** you will know learning has occurred.

*Example:* **(WHO)** Third grade teachers from Blue Valley
**(WHAT)** will be able to list 10 ways to use TV in their current curriculum
**(WHEN)** by the end of the training session.
**(HOW)** From lists turned in, 60 percent will have identified a minimum of eight.

Objectives may be as complex or simple as you desire. The only constraints to keep in mind are the time limits and motivation of participants. In general, simpler objectives require less time and less motivation from participants. For example, the objective, "Participants will be able to name two TV related materials which are available to them," could be accomplished in a 10-minute presentation at a faculty or PTA meeting. On the other hand, the objective, "Participants will plan and carry out an effort to influence local TV programming," will take a considerable amount of time as well as a high degree of participant commitment.

Whatever your goals, an objective can be developed that will state them clearly. A major advantage in specifying objectives in terms of participant behavior is that you will then be able to make the workshop activities fit those objectives. The following guide for matching participant outcomes with types of training activities will help you select the type of activities that can accomplish those outcomes best. Definitions for terms used in the guide are as follows:

## *PARTICIPANT OUTCOME: What you want the participants to be able to do.*

If a person has:

**KNOWLEDGE:** He/she can identify, remember, recognize, or state information.

**UNDERSTANDING:** He/she can state the *meaning* of information.

**THE ABILITY TO ANALYZE:** He/she can compare and contrast facts, and break information down into its component parts.

**MOTIVATION:** He/she will be willing to make some sort of commitment to action.

**COMMITMENT:** He/she will persist in an action even if opposed.

**SKILL:** He/she can perform actions in at least a minimally acceptable manner.

## *TYPES OF TRAINING ACTIVITIES*

**LECTURE:** An oral presentation of information. There is rarely any participation by the audience and very little feedback.

**VISUAL PRESENTATION:** A presentation of information using visual aids such as pictures, films, overhead projectors, charts, slides or videotape. Again, this method rarely encourages participation by viewers.

**DEMONSTRATION:** Doing something that you want someone else to do while they observe you. Usually, after the demonstration, participants practice the observed skills.

**FIELD TRIP:** Taking participants on a structured visit to a place that you want them to learn about.

**ROLE PLAYING:** Letting someone practice a skill or technique in a simulated setting. Afterwards, the situation and reactions to it may be analyzed and evaluated.

**BUZZ GROUPS:** Participants are divided into small groups for the purpose of offering solutions to problems or coming up with ideas. Time is limited. A representative of each small group reports to the total audience.

**BRAINSTORMING:** A method of problem solving which has industrial origins. Members of the group suggest solutions to problems quickly. There is no discussion, criticism or evaluation. Solutions are listed for later discussion.

**DISCUSSION:** The workshop leader poses an idea or problem and the group exchanges ideas or viewpoints. This method must be kept orderly and under control by a strong leader.

## *GUIDE FOR MATCHING ACTIVITIES TO DESIRED PARTICIPANT OUTCOME*

1. **Select the type of participant outcome that corresponds to an objective you have selected/specified.**
2. **Determine which types of training activities can accomplish the outcome you've selected.**
3. **Design/select activities of the specified type(s).**

By using this guide you can avoid the frustration of conducting an **activity** that does not result in the type of **outcome** you had in mind. For example, if you want participants to be proficient in mediation, a lecture on mediation techniques would not be appropriate. In order to obtain **proficiency in a skill**, a person must **practice**. You may need to explain the technique (lecture) and show participants how to do it (demonstration) as preparation. But it is only through actually doing the activity that they will gain the skill. Remember, adults learn best by doing! On the other hand, if you want participants to know what materials are available, a description (lecture) of the materials will probably suffice. It would not be necessary to take participants to see the materials being produced (field trip).

# *OUTLINE FOR A WORKSHOP*

***To aid you in planning your critical television viewing skills workshop the following outline is suggested.***

**(Workshop Title)**

**I. OBJECTIVE(S)**

**II. TYPE OF PARTICIPANT OUTCOME CORRESPONDING WITH OBJECTIVE(S)**

**III. TYPES OF TRAINING ACTIVITIES TO ACCOMPLISH DESIRED PARTICIPANT OUTCOME**

**IV. SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES TO PROMOTE ABOVE OBJECTIVES, TIME REQUIRED, AIDS TO BE USED**

## *GUIDE FOR MATCHING PARTICIPANT OUTCOMES WITH TYPES OF TRAINING ACTIVITIES*

| *TYPE OF PARTICIPANT OUTCOME DESIRED* | *TYPE OF TRAINING ACTIVITY* | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | LECTURE | VISUAL PRESENTATION | DEMONSTRATION | FIELD TRIP | ROLE PLAYING | BUZZ GROUPS | BRAIN STORMING | DISCUSSION |
| KNOWLEDGE | *Yes* | *Yes* | *Yes* | *Yes* | *Yes* | *Yes* | *Yes* | *Yes* |
| UNDERSTANDING | *Yes* | *Yes* | *Yes* | *Yes* | *Yes* | *Yes* | *Yes* | *Yes* |
| ANALYSIS | *Yes* | *Yes* | *Yes* | *Yes* | *Yes* | *Yes* | *Yes* | *Yes* |
| MOTIVATION | *No* | *No* | *Yes* | *Yes* | *Yes* | *Yes* | *Yes* | *Yes* |
| COMMITMENT | *No* | *No* | *Yes* | *Yes* | *Yes* | *No* | *No* | *Yes* |
| SKILL | *No* | *No* | *No* | *No* | *Yes* | *No* | *No* | *No* |

### WORKSHOP PLANNING CHECK LIST

The following list includes the major requirements for a successful workshop. While you may not always be required to plan a workshop from scratch, consider the following, disregarding those points that are not applicable, and adding others where necessary.

_____ Identify audience or group who will attend workshop

_____ Establish goals and objectives of the workshop

_____ Set date

_____ Establish time, schedule

_____ Develop a budget

_____ Choose a place and arrange for facilities

_____ Develop a workshop plan and outline

_____ Promote the workshop within and outside the organization through:

___ press releases ___ newspapers ___ radio ___ TV

___ posters ___ organizational publications

_____ Plan evaluation procedure and follow up if more than one workshop is planned

_____ Determine materials needed:

___ handouts ___ evaluation sheets ___ resource lists

___ displays ___ flip charts ___ flannel board

___ posters ___ pictures ___ slides ___ filmstrips

___ films ___ chalkboard

_____ Prepare materials if necessary

_____ Determine equipment needed:

___ projector ___ extra bulbs ___ recorder ___ screen

___ TV set ___ videotape equipment ___ extension cord

_____ Arrange to obtain equipment

_____ Plan room arrangement, placement of:

___ chairs ___ tables ___ audio/visual equipment
___ podium ___ lighting ___ exhibits

_____ Arrange for registration materials:

___ table ___ chairs ___ pens ___ name tags

___ paper or preprinted sign-in sheet ___ pins

___ change (if registration fee is charged)

_____ Make arrangements for refreshments:

___ tables ___ food ___ beverages

_____ Other

## *EVALUATING THE WORKSHOP*

A part of any well executed workshop is the evaluation of the workshop by its participants. The form provided in this manual is a general evaluation which can help you assess the audience's reactions to your presentation. An evaluation should be a measure which tells whether or not the learning objectives were met. It does not assess the degree of skill that a group has acquired. You are encouraged to use this form or any other which will give the participants' view of their training.

Evaluations will assist you in planning your next workshop. Properly used, they will point out strengths and weaknesses. Some positive action should result from the evaluation. A workshop leader could build on the strengths pointed out or strengthen weaknesses which were identified. Also, a workshop leader could report to some officer or senior staff member in the organization and make recommendations for the future.

If desired, follow up evaluations may be made at a later time to see if participants acted on their knowledge in some way, or retained ideas learned.

## *GENERAL EVALUATION*

1. Did the workshop hold your interest?

YES _____ NO

5 4 3 2 1

YES SOMEWHAT NO

2. Did you learn anything new during this workshop?

YES _____ NO

5 4 3 2 1

3. Do you plan to use any of the suggestions?

YES _____ NO

5 4 3 2 1

4. Did the workshop meet your expectations?

YES _____ NO

5 4 3 2 1

5. Comments/Suggestions:

# *WORKSHOP LEADER'S SELF EVALUATION*

***If you plan to conduct more than one workshop, the following may aid in improving your next presentation.***

**General**

1. Were the learning objectives met? _____
   If not, why not? _____
   _____

**Leader's Presentation**

2. Was the leader well prepared? _____
3. Were a variety of training methods and aids used? _____
4. Were the materials adequate? _____
   If not, what was missing? _____
   _____
5. Were available resource materials noted? _____

**Participants' Reaction**

6. Did participants actively participate in the workshop?
   _____
7. Were participants lost at any time during the workshop?
   _____
   _____
   If so, how can such be prevented next time? _____

**Arrangements**

8. Was the schedule satisfactory? _____
   If not, what should be changed? _____
   _____
9. Was the facility adequate? _____
   If not, what was lacking? _____
   _____
10. Was the room arrangement satisfactory? _____
    If not, what can be done next time? _____
    _____
11. Was the conference successfully promoted? _____

**Suggestions for Next Time**

12. What will be done to improve the next workshop? _____
    _____

# *SUGGESTIONS FOR TRAINING SPECIFIC ADULT GROUPS*

## *ACTIVITY SCRIPTS EXPLAINED*

Each activity script contains an objective, the title of the activity, and the audience for which it is designed, the time required, the maximum number of participants, and the materials required.

Each activity is described in detail. Instructions or dialogue directed to participants are enclosed in "quotation marks." Directions to workshop leaders are in **bold face type.**

You should modify the instructions to the participants to fit your style or the group with which you are working. You may also want to modify the activity itself. These activities are provided as guides, not as limitations. Make up your own activities if you wish — or when you feel the situation calls for it.

The activities included in this manual are intended as examples. You will probably focus more on **presentation** of information through lectures, visual presentations, and demonstrations. Most likely you will have a relatively short period of time available for a workshop.

When time is limited, an oral or visual presentation is probably the most efficient way to communicate information. It is also the least likely to sustain participant interest. This manual provides you with sufficient information from which to develop presentations. The activity scripts are included to encourage you to utilize methods that elicit more participant involvement in the workshops.

# *SAMPLE ACTIVITY SCRIPTS FOR GENERAL AUDIENCES*

## *#1*

**OBJECTIVE:** Participants will be able to describe some benefits and some hazards of watching TV.

**ACTIVITY:** TV — FRIEND OR FOE?

**AUDIENCE:** General

**TIME REQUIRED:** 10-15 minutes

**MAXIMUM # OF PARTICIPANTS:** unlimited

**MATERIALS REQUIRED:** chalkboard or newsprint and markers

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"I'd like to give you an opportunity to think about how TV affects our lives. I'm sure you have heard all kinds of things about how TV is bad for us and for our kids. Help me make a list of the ways TV is harmful to people. Just call out anything that you've observed or heard about how TV is bad for us."

**Write down all suggestions. It may be helpful to ask someone to help with the recording. Don't permit argument or discussion at this time — just get the comments recorded.**

"O.K. That's the bad side. What's good about TV? How do we benefit?"

**Write down suggestions as before.**

"Well, that's how things seem to stand. Any comments or conclusions about this?"

**Try to lead the discussion of the statements on the board so that you can draw the following summary:**

"It appears that TV is a mixed blessing. It does offer *some* benefits but uncontrolled these benefits may come at a very high price. Reducing the costs of TV viewing and capitalizing on the benefits of TV is the aim of the critical TV Viewing Skills Project in designing materials.

## #2

**OBJECTIVE:** Participants will identify their TV viewing patterns. They will learn how to help children use TV wisely.

**ACTIVITY:** WHAT'S YOUR PATTERN?

**TIME REQUIRED:** 10-15 minutes

**MAXIMUM # OF PARTICIPANTS:** unlimited

**MATERIALS REQUIRED:** **TV Frog Logs** and TV program listings for the week

---

**Distribute TV Frog Log.**

"I am distributing a copy of the **TV Frog Log** which has been designed for children. Please take a few minutes and fill it out for yourself. When you finish listing the programs you have watched during the last week, code it according to the key printed on the log.

**When everyone has finished, say:**

"Look at your week's viewing and calculate the total number of hours you spent watching TV last week. Also calculate the number of hours within each program category.

**When everyone has finished, say:**

"Any surprises? Let me ask you how many of you watched **less** than you thought you did? The **same** as you thought? **More?** What have you learned from this?

## *SUGGESTIONS FOR TRAINING TEACHERS*

There are several things to keep in mind when training teachers:

**1. Teachers have extensive demands placed on them.** They tend to have insufficient classroom and planning time to meet these demands.

**2. Teachers have experience and expertise in planning and conducting lessons with children. They will know immediately whether or not you are well prepared.**

**3. Teacher have curricular objectives they are required to meet.** They have limited time for additional activities that do not also focus on their established curricular priorities.

**4. Teachers have tremendous out-of-the-classroom demands for planning, preparing, grading, and record-keeping.** Extra activities or commitments are not always welcome

There are other things that also characterize the context in which teachers operate but these are sufficient to recognize here. What all this means is that when you train teachers it is very important that your lesson be well planned, effectively presented, appropriate to their needs, and useful in meeting their own curricular priorities. As a leader, you should recognize and be respectful of teachers' expertise.

Teachers are accustomed to adapting materials for their students. In most cases you will have limited time with teachers. Therefore it is probably best to emphasize that we are not giving teachers another curriculum, but suggesting strategies for using TV as a resource. Another focus of training time should be the materials themselves. They are attractive and will establish appeal for the total project. Explain their uses and encourage teachers to adapt them in whatever ways will be most helpful.

In general, give teachers as much time as possible *during* the training to familiarize themselves with the materials and to begin planning ways to use them in their classes.

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# *SAMPLE ACTIVITY SCRIPTS FOR TEACHERS*

## #3

**OBJECTIVE:** Participants will be able to describe three appropriate uses for the **TV Frog Log** and **TV Discovery Game**

**ACTIVITY:** LIGHTS, CAMERA, ACTION!

**AUDIENCE:** Teachers

**MAXIMUM # OF PARTICIPANTS:** 30

**TIME REQUIRED:** 1 hour

**MATERIALS NEEDED:** **TV Frog Logs** and **TV Discovery Games**, chalkboard

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"Most children — and adults for that matter — are fairly passive viewers of television. Many people turn the TV on and then simply leave it running regardless of what happens to be on at a given time.

Two ways of changing these patterns of passive viewing are (1) **planning what to watch** and (2) **being more active while watching.** Two different types of of materials have been developed to help children make better decisions regarding their TV viewing time."

**Distribute Frog Logs.**

"I'd like for you to complete this **TV Frog Log** on your own TV viewing behavior during the last week."

**Give participants 5 minutes for this task.**

"Add up the hours and analyze the categories of programs that you watch with the greatest frequency. Any surprises?"

**Invite participants to report their reactions to their own TV viewing.**

"There are many uses of the logs with children. Lets write them down.

1. Children can complete it as you did — **record keeping**
2. They can construct a schedule for their viewing — **planning**
3. They can use it to **document changes** in their viewing — either planned changes or spontaneousness — charting, graphing
4. They can use it to **conduct experiments:**
   a. limit TV viewing to one category of program
   b. limit TV viewing to certain days of the week, certain times of the day, etc.
   c. balance viewing in certain categories.

"What would the effects of these experiments be? The **Frog Logs** can serve a record keeping function that can form the basis of a report or paper on the results of the experiment.

"Are there any other ways you can think of using the logs with individual children, groups of children, or the class as a whole? What benefits can you see in the use of the logs?"

**Record responses on board. Invite discussion about these items.**

"In addition to becoming more aware of TV viewing patterns, it is desirable to help children become more active viewers. The **TV Discovery Game** is designed for that purpose."

**Distribute question cards and display game boards.**

"The **TV Discovery Game** is designed for use while actually watching TV. Therefore it will have limited use as a game in the classroom. However, modifications can be made that will make it more appropriate for classroom use. Please look at the question cards I have distributed. You will notice that all the cards contain one or more questions. These questions are appropriate to ask during or after a program. Students could select three questions on which to write a short paragraph or on which to base an oral report. Some of the questions are appropriate not only to TV commercials, but to advertising in general. Look at the cards for a few moments and think of ways these questions could be used in your class."

**Give participants 5 minutes. Invite ideas about how to use either the game itself or the questions in the classroom. Record responses on board. Summarize themes that emerge.**

## *#4*

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**OBJECTIVE:** Participants will be able to describe three uses of the **Suzie Stories** and **Frog Fables** in their classroom.

**ACTIVITY:** SUZIE AND SEE-MORE TEACH LANGUAGE ARTS

**AUDIENCE:** Teachers

**MAXIMUM # OF PARTICIPANTS:** 30

**TIME REQUIRED:** 30 minutes

**MATERIALS:** **Suzie Stories** and **Frog Fables**

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"Children are TV's most vulnerable audience. They watch hours of programming — often without understanding the content of what they see, the purpose of the program, or the techniques used to communicate these messages. To address this lack of information and understanding two sets of stories have been developed which teach some of the techniques used by the television industry as well as critical TV viewing skills. These stories are found in self-contained booklets which have been written so they may be read to students or for students to read on their own. Each story has a set of accompanying questions that may be used to make certain that students understood the content."

**Distribute Suzie and See-More stories.**

"I'm handing out copies of these stories for you to examine. I'd like for you to read **one** of the stories and think about ways that it could be used in your language arts curriculum."

**Give participants 10 minutes to read stories.**

"I'd like for those of you who read **Suzie Stories** to raise your hands."

**Direct "Suzie" participants to form groups of two or three.**

"I'd like for those of you who read **See-More Stories** to raise your hands."

**Direct "See-More" participants to form groups of two or three.**

"In your groups make a joint list of the important concepts presented in the stories. This list may include things that aren't directly related to TV or TV viewing. When your list is complete or after 10 minutes, I'll stop you and give you more instructions."

**Give participants no more than 10 minutes on this task.**

"You have just been focusing on the content of the stories. What I'd like for you to do now is to think of all the possible ways you might use these stories in your classroom. I'll give you about 10 minutes for this task, then I will ask for a report from the group."

**When 10 minutes have passed ask one member from each group to report on the ideas generated by each group. Close the session with a discussion of what information was new to them in this workshop.**

## #5

**OBJECTIVE:** Participants will design one new activity for their class incorporating TV into their resources.

**ACTIVITY:** MATH, LANGUAGE ARTS, SOCIAL STUDIES, ETC. THROUGH TV

**AUDIENCE:** Teachers (preferably from only one subject area)

**MAXIMUM # OF PARTICIPANTS:** 30

**TIME REQUIRED:** 1 hour

**MATERIALS REQUIRED:** **Teacher Cue Cards**, blank cards, pens, chalk-board or newsprint and markers.

---

"I'm certain that many of you are concerned about the amount of time children spend watching TV. Many educators attribute a lack of interest in school and studying to TV. Parents, too, are uneasy about what to do about TV in their homes. The fact is that TV is a reality that none of us in here is very likely to eliminate from the American life, no matter how much we'd like to. This workshop is designed to show you some ways that TV can be seen as a resource."

**Distribute Teacher Cue Cards. Give all cards for a particular subject area to each participant.**

"I am distributing a packet of **Teacher Cue Cards** for *(subject area)* to each of you. When you get them, I'd like for you to examine them. Look over all of them and select one to read fairly carefully."

**Give participants 5-10 minutes to examine cards (depending on number of cards in section).**

"In the past, TV has been a vehicle for instruction through educational programming. Shows have been developed whose explicit intent was to **teach**. Instructional TV in this sense has had mixed results. These cards, as you probably noticed, are not necessarily designed for use with **instructional programming** but with the **commercial** programming that most children watch already. As you read over these cards, what benefits do you see from utilizing TV as an instructional resource?"

**List participants responses, 3-5 minutes.**

"What reservations do you have about using TV in this way?"

**List participants responses, 3-5 minutes. Summarize benefits and reservations.**

"The developers of these cards do not intent for you to be coerced into using these ideas. Instead their intent was to offer you a way of thinking about TV that might be different from your current views. The cards are an invitation to you to consider using TV in this way in your classroom if your instructional objectives can be fostered through their use. Another realization is that the ideas in these **Cue Cards** are by no means exhaustive. You are the one who is really in the best position to design ways to use TV to enhance your curriculum."

**Direct Participants to form groups of two or three. Distribute blank cards.**

"Please spend the next 20 minutes designing activities for your class that would fit your goals and your students. You may choose to design one activity or you may design as many as time permits. In 20 minutes I'll ask each group to share the best or favorite idea with the total group. I'll be available as a consultant to you and will be eavesdropping on your conversations. Please let me know if you need anything. Are there any questions?"

**Answer questions. Circulate among groups. After 20 minutes ask each group to share one idea.**

**After each group has shared one idea, invite discussion and comments about TV as an instructional resource.**

## *SUGGESTIONS FOR TRAINING PARENTS*

Most parents are doing the best job they know how to do in raising their children. Many parents also worry that they are not doing things "right." Your training should affirm their intent and offer suggestions for interaction with children regarding TV viewing.

You will need to remember that parents differ in values, skills, interests, parenting styles, and external demands. Emphasize how a parent teaches a child not only with words but with actions also. Officer suggestions of how to **model** more decision-making about TV viewing how to **enhance** a message, how to **counteract** a message and how to **use** TV as an entry into a wide variety of topics for discussion.

Avoid criticisms that may make parents feel guilty about their past behavior. Focus rather on what they can do in the future. Encourage parents to make changes that seem to have the most benefit for them and their families.

## *SAMPLE ACTIVITY SCRIPTS FOR PARENTS*

### #6

**OBJECTIVE:** Participants will be able to use the skills of mediation and indirect mediation in a simulated situation.

**ACTIVITY:** MAKING TV FIT YOUR FAMILY

**AUDIENCE:** Parents

**TIME REQUIRED:** 20-25 minutes

**MAXIMUM # OF PARTICIPANTS:** unlimited, but best under 30

**MATERIALS REQUIRED:** Chalkboard or newsprint and marker, video-taped segments of programs or commercials highly desireable.

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Speak for 5-10 minutes on the difference between children's TV viewing and adults' TV viewing. Include these points:

1. Children's cognitive development limits their understanding of TV.
2. Children may not make a distinction between reality and pretense.

3. Children may not understand sales intent of commercials.
4. Children may make inaccurate assessment of right and wrong based on consequences of actions.
5. Adults can impact the conclusions that children will make after watching programs by using the techniques of direct mediation, indirect mediation, and spring boarding.
6. Other points and examples designed for the age group child that a given group of parents have.

**Demonstrate mediation. Show a 3 to 5 minute segment (if you do not have videotape equipment, describe a scene from a TV show) of a program. Ask for two volunteers and assign a participant in the role of a child, assign another participant the role of spouse, friend, or other adult. Ask participants to observe you during the demonstration. Make sure you address mediating responses to the "child" during the segment. EXAMPLE: The segment is a clip from a movie and shows the lead getting into a car after leaving a party where he/she had too much to drink. You might say things such as:**

"He/she shouldn't be driving. Someone at the party should have stopped him/her. It's so dangerous to drive when a person's drunk. Other people can get hurt, etc. . . ."

**Ask participants to describe what you did. List their observations. When all the observations are listed, summarize the demonstration by affirming the observations that describe the technique. Example:**

"You're good observers. I made comments that expressed my own values about the dangers of drinking and driving. I'm sure you can see that this is a pretty natural technique. Basically you say what you think. It's important to remember that you can either try to counteract a message or you can support a message. Your goal is to help your child see an event in a way that you think is beneficial."

**Direct participants to form groups of three. Once they are in groups, ask one person in each group to be the parent, one the child and one the observer. Show a segment of a TV program (or describe a scene from a program). Instruct parent to make mediating responses to the program. Instruct observers to listen and watch carefully so they can describe what the parent said and did. At the conclusion of the segment (or after 3-5 minutes) stop the activity. Give these instructions:**

"I'd like for those of you who acted as the parents to tell the other two what you were trying to accomplish with your statements."

**Give them 2-3 minutes.**

"O.K. Now I'd like for the observer to give you information about what things you said and did that helped you accomplish your ends."

Give about 2-3 minutes.

"Are there any questions?"

**Answer any questions.**

"We've been practicing a technique called **direct mediation.** This technique can help you help your child as he or she watches TV. Another technique you may want to use is **indirect mediation.** Let me describe it. Basically, it utilizes the same principle of saying what you think but instead of talking directly to the child you talk to someone else in the room. That person may be your spouse, an older sibling, a neighbor or relative. The point here is to decrease the child's resistance to your message by not requiring a response.

"For example, a TV program has just shown a child getting angry with his or her parents, slamming the front door, getting on a bicycle and speeding away down a busy street oblivious of the danger. If you were to speak directly to your child about this instance, he or she might be identifying with the child on TV. By commenting to the other person something like . . . 'That boy is so angry, he doesn't notice the traffic. I hope he cools off so he notices the traffic and doesn't get hurt.' The message of your concern is transmitted **indirectly** to your child and becomes much less threatening."

## #7

---

**OBJECTIVE:** Participants will be able to state their personal values regarding TV.
**ACTIVITY:** TV IS A BLANKETY, BLANK, BLANK, BLANK.
**MAXIMUM # OF PARTICIPANTS:** Unlimited, but best under 30.
**TIME REQUIRED:** 20 minutes.
**MATERIALS NEEDED:** One sentence completion instrument for each participant.

---

**Make opening remarks:**

"TV is such a powerful presence in our lives that we often don't examine our thoughts and beliefs about this ever present visitor in our homes. I'd like to give you an opportunity to examine your reactions to TV, and to put them into words."

**Distribute sentence completion instruments.**

"I'm passing out a list of statements which I hope will stimulate your thinking. Complete each statement with the first thing that comes to your mind. These statements are simply to start you thinking. No one else will see them so feel free to be candid."

**Give participants time to complete the instruments. 5-10 minutes. Instruct participants to form groups of 6-8. When groups are formed, give the following instructions:**

"In your groups spend 10 minutes talking about your reactions to these statements. Focus especially on things which surprised you and things which are clearer to you now than they were before."

Complete each sentence with a word or short phrase.

1. TV is _____.
2. When I was growing up TV was _____.
3. If we didn't have a TV _____.
4. The program I like the most is _____.
5. The program I wish would be taken off TV is _____.
6. My child(ren) watch(es) TV _____.
7. I'll be happy when TV _____.
8. TV has made our home _____.
9. I don't understand why TV _____.
10. Commercials _____.
11. What TV does best is _____.
12. TV can never take the place of _____.
13. No one should watch more than _____ hours of TV per day.
14. I watch _____ hours of TV a day.
15. If TV is addictive, I'm _____.
16. TV has made children _____.
17. I wish more programs were _____.
18. Children need to learn that TV _____.
19. TV interferes with _____.
20. TV could _____.
21. TV in the classroom _____.
22. Before TV, people _____.
23. When my child(ren) watch(es) TV, I _____.
24. TV teaches my child(ren) _____.
25. At its best, TV _____.

## *#8*

**OBJECTIVE:** Participants will identify common concerns about TV.
**ACTIVITY:** WE AGREE
**AUDIENCE:** Parents
**MAXIMUM # OF PARTICIPANTS:** Unlimited ,but best under 30.
**TIME REQUIRED:** 45-60 minutes.
**MATERIALS NEEDED:** Newsprint and markers for each 6-8 participants. Masking tape.

---

**This activity might follow several previous activity scripts where participants state their views. Distribute newsprint and markers to each group. Give instructions:**

"Title your sheets of newsprint, 'We Agree' then list as many things about TV on which you agree. Some items may need to be discussed and changed. If you don't get agreement, that's all right, but don't list it on the paper. You'll have 15 minutes for this task."

**Give groups 15-20 minutes.**

**Post your lists on the walls and then review the lists of other groups. Give groups 5 minutes for posting and reviewing.**

"Now get back in your group and make another list. The title for this list is 'Someone Should'."

## *SUGGESTIONS FOR TRAINING YOUTH LEADERS*

Training for youth leaders has some points in common with teacher training and others in common with parent training. Remember that youth leaders often have a lot of time invested in the organization with which they are associated. They believe strongly in the ideals and principles of their organization.

Youth leaders work with other people's children as do teachers. They may be paid staff, but in most cases they are probably volunteers. Their backgrounds and experiences may be very different from one another's. So the workshop design should take this possible heterogenous grouping into consideration. Usually youth-serving organizations place much emphasis upon development of the individual and therefore offer many kinds of leadership training.

When planning a training session for youth leaders, try to obtain some information about their particular organization. Knowing the objectives of the group helps you choose meaningful activities and tailor the workshop to fit the needs of the particular organization. Recognize the possible expertise that youth leaders may have in training and conducting workshops. They can make your job easier.

## *REMEMBER, WHEN WORKING WITH YOUTH LEADERS . . .*

1. **Make sure you understand the goals of the organization.**
2. **Be aware of the type of activities usually sponsored by the organization.**
3. **Find out what kind of children participate in the organization.**
4. **Familiarize yourself with the ways in which the youth leaders and the children interact.**
5. **Use all of this knowledge as a basis for designing your workshop.**
6. **Most youth leaders are volunteers who have responsibilities outside the organization. Keep your suggestions reasonable in terms of the amount of time involved.**
7. **Have an action focus.**

# *SAMPLE ACTIVITY SCRIPTS FOR YOUTH LEADERS*

## *#9*

**OBJECTIVE:** Participants will plan ways to teach critical television viewing skills through their organization's acitivities.

**ACTIVITY:** OH SAY CAN WE SEE, WAYS TO LOOK AT TV
(To be used after group has an understanding of what critical television viewing skills are)

**AUDIENCE:** Youth leaders

**MAXIMUM # OF PARTICIPANTS:** unlimited, but best under 30. (Be sure to plan how you will divide into groups of 5 or 6 before the workshop begins.)

**TIME REQUIRED:** 30 minutes (Brainstorm for 5 minutes, refine ideas for 10 minutes, list three ideas to present to the group in 5 minutes, present one idea from as many groups as possible for ten minutes.)

**MATERIALS NEEDED:** Paper and pencils, or newsprint and magic markers (Have ideas reproduced as handouts at the end of the workshop, if possible, or make them available later at a prearranged place or mail them to those who registered for the workshop. Arrange to have them printed in organization's publication.)

---

"Much of a youth serving organization's time and money are devoted to planning activities that will result in development of the individual. And since it has often been said, that two heads are better than one, let's get together in groups of five or six and attempt a little brainstorming and planning.

"We'll divide into groups, choose a leader, a time keeper, and a secretary. Brainstorm for 5 minutes. Do not discuss or discard any ideas presented at this point. Then for the next 10 minutes, discuss, discard, and refine the ideas that seem workable. During the last 5 minutes, choose your best three ideas to share with the entire workshop in written form. Choose someone to present one of the three to the entire workshop. We will then reproduce all of the group suggestions to be distributed later."

**You may not, depending upon the number of groups, have time to hear from all of them. Do explain at the close of the activity, how they will receive copies of the ideas of each group.**

## #10

**OBJECTIVE:** Participants will design a project for use with the children in their unit.
**ACTIVITY:** MAKE A DIFFERENCE
**AUDIENCE:** Youth leaders
**MAXIMUM # OF PARTICIPANTS:** 20 to 30
**TIME REQUIRED:** 1 hour plus
**MATERIALS NEEDED:** **Frog Logs, TV Discovery Game, Susie and See-More Stories, Family Focus,** newsprint and markers

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**Give an overview and introduction to the topic of critical TV viewing skills. (10 minutes). Invite questions and comments to your remarks. Ask what the organization's goals are relative to TV and children. Direct participants to form groups of 4 or 5.**

"Think about the words:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Prevent | Entertain | Inform |
| | Protest | Guide | Change |
| Recommend | Support | Teach | Motivate" |

**Write words on chalkboard or newsprint.**

"Write sentences that use these words and describe what you see as your organization's position on TV and children. Write your sentences using at least five of these words as the verbs in your sentences."

**Give participants 5-10 minutes to complete the task.**

"Now go back through the sentences and rank them in the order of your priorities — most important gets #1, then rank less important ones through at least #5. Try to agree on your ranking. When you don't agree, listen to each other's position to be sure you understand it. Sometimes agreement is closer than you think."

**Give participants 5-10 minutes to complete the task.**

"When you've finished ranking the words, post your list on the wall or cork board and review the lists that other groups have made.

**Allow 5 minutes for posting and reviewing. Ask one member of each group to report on the list. Invite clarifications and explanations. Compile all sentences ranked #1. Ask group as a whole to rank order the composite list. Ask for show of hands #1, #2, etc. for each sentence. Clarify which one or ones seem to be most important.**

**When some calculation is reached about which goal is most important to them, lead them through a planning process which will specify steps to reach their goal. Draw on the SEDL materials as needed to support their goals.**

"Let's be sure that when we leave we leave with specific answers to these questions:

1. What are we trying to accomplish?
2. How long will we allot to the task?
3. Who will be involved?
4. Who is responsible for each part of the task?
5. How will we know we've accomplished our task?

# APPENDICES

## REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

Television viewing has become a dominant part of children's lives, a major component in families' styles and interaction patterns. Television has been absorbed into our everyday activities. It is now regarded as a natural part of our lives and our culture. In fact, it is difficult for children to visualize what life must have been like before the introduction of television. However, this massive impact of television on our lives is not necessarily neutral.

Broadcast television may represent two problems of national importance in America today, (a) the negative effects upon children's social and academic development; and (b) the failure to use television programming as a beneficial resource.

While the effects of television are not necessarily neutral, not all of the effects are negative. Some television programs, like SESAME STREET, ELECTRIC COMPANY, and CARRASCOLENDAS are aimed at developing language skills in children. To some extent these programs have had positive effects. However, these programs are primarily aimed at (and are viewed by) very young children, and they do not usually constitute a major proportion of a child's viewing time. Therefore, concern has arisen about the effects of other TV programs on children. Much of the literature on this subject shows the outcome to be less than desirable. Consequently, television viewing among students of all ages may well be a growing national problem.

There is now a substantial body of evidence indicating that television content, whether viewed for information or entertainment purposes, does sometimes influence the information, attitudes, and behavior of students. There is an abundance of documentation of the effects of instructional programming and of entertainment programs featuring aggressive behavior. Although there are fewer studies, there is similar evidence of the effects on children of the ways in which commercials and programs portray sex roles, race roles, occupational roles, national roles, and prosocial behavior.

Similarly, the effects of television on academic achievement is an issue of concern to many parents and teachers. There has been little firm research on the topic of how television might have affected school achievement over the past 30 years during which television has become an integral part of families. The studies that have been done to date are correlational in nature and equivocal in results.

Ridder (1963) found in a survey of seventh and eighth graders that there was no significant relationship between academic achievement and total number of hours spent viewing television. A more recent study by Childers and Ross (1973) examined the viewing habits of 100 elementary pupils in relation to their IQ, GPA, and achievement on standardized tests. They concluded that quantity and quality of viewing television has not changed in 20 years and that neither were predictors of pupil achievement.

Contrariwise, Scott (1954) found that those elementary-school children who watched television fewer hours had consistently higher achievement scores in many subject areas and also in total achievement, than did those students who watched more hours. More recently, Starkey and Swinford (1974) found a slight relationship between reading ability and the amount of leisure time that fifth and sixth graders spent watching TV. The better readers watched less than the poor readers. Finally, in the most recent report available, Rubenstein and Perkins (1976) gathered data from a large stratified sample of Rhode Island school students including fourth graders, eighth graders, and 17-year-olds. Results indicated that students at all grade/age levels who watched excessive amounts of television (more than four hours a day) exhibited lower achievement than other students. Achievement scores generally decreased as the number of hours the student spent watching television increased.

When young children were exposed to mass media prior to the advent of TV, it usually had been selected in advance by a parent. Now, however, the ready availability and continuous effluence of TV have usurped many aspects of socialization once under parental control. Research by Greenberg, at al, (1971) with parents and children suggests that, despite the long number of hours family members spend watching the television set, those hours are not accompanied by any significant family interaction directed toward the medium or its content.

One of the critical issues involved in the effects of television on students' learning is the fact that students often do not accurately understand TV content. The literature indicates that this ability to understand and realistically interpret TV content is age-related. Collins (1973) found that there are age differences which affect children's understanding and evaluation of TV content, which in turn would determine the effect that content has on the child. He found that younger children: (a) do not comprehend the motives for acts portrayed on TV; (b) do not understand the consequences of doing certain acts; and (c) often evaluate the characters in terms of the consequences of their acts. For example, a child will think the aggressors were bad because they were sent to jail. Furthermore, Collins and Westley (1975) found that "age differences in organizing and using information from shows may lead to different interpretations of interscene relationships than adults would have made themselves." Thus, the distorted impression of a character and the social role of that character can result in a failure to make the inferences necessary to reconcile the discrepancies in complex role portrayals, such as the crooked cop or soft-hearted gangster. Along the same lines, Meyer (1976) studied the effects of ALL IN THE FAMILY, which is usually designed around a central theme involving some moral/ethical dimension of a situation. Shows such as this have large student audiences, yet student viewers do not fully understand the situations that occur, and in fact are affected by the program in different ways from adult viewers. Finally, children younger than seven or eight are confused about commercials. They view commercials as "real" and truthful messages and often cannot discriminate between the commericals and the program.

There is a growing body of literature which suggests that students of all ages do not select, understand, or retain the information which most adults consider essential in television programs. Most of this work has been with entertainment programs because these constitute what most students watch. Indications are that children, even adolescents, are likely

to learn much content which adults consider irrelevant to the basic plot, that children younger than seven have great difficulty putting even the major incidents of a program in proper sequence, and that the ability to sequence continues to develop into the post-secondary school years. Even at ages of eight to ten, students have only a rudimentary understanding that plotlines include motivations, actions, and consequences. Other evidence indicates that there is a gradual increase throughout childhood and adolescence in the number of "facts" students remember from entertainment films and from television, and that it is unlikely that students younger than about ten will try to draw inferences relating one part of a program to another. All of this suggests that, as with reading, there is a need to assist students in recognizing of "topic scenes," to understanding content, drawing inferences from one part of a story to another, and remembering what is important.

In the literature on children and television, data has been reported regarding the kinds of thing that can influence what children learn from television. For example, family interactions involving TV content may be particularly important for preschool viewers. It seems that both informational and attitudinal statements made by adults aid greatly in the young child's comprehension of the on-going program content. Possibly the earliest evidence of the significance of family interaction during television viewing is found in Ball and Bogatz's (1970) first-year evaluation of SESAME STREET. Students who watched and learned more came from homes where the program was watched by both mother and child and where the mother talked with the child about the show. Later, Salomon (1974) found that, when mothers were encouraged to watch SESAME STREET with their children for two hours a week, these children (particularly the lower-class group) developed more of the specific cognitive skills the programs were designed to teach.

In addition to family interaction during TV viewing, parental control of children's television viewing is also important. Fifteen years ago, Hess and Goldman (1962) observed that mothers were relatively apathetic about what effects television might have on their children. These researchers reported that only a small proportion of mothers were enthusiastic about children's programming or were significantly worried about the potential effects of types of programming upon their small children. However, recent evidence suggests a great increase in parental concern. The formation of citizens action groups such as Action for Children's Television and hearings on violence sponsored by the National PTA are examples.

Barcus (1969) reported that parents controlled their children's television viewing for the following reasons: (a) because children may be prematurely exposed to the adult world; (b) because television is less important than other activities (such as schoolwork and outdoor play); and (c) because they were fearful that their children might imitate undesirable behavior. Furthermore, most parents seem to be unaware of the full extent of their children's viewing.

Rossiter and Robertson (1975) assume there are four possible areas in which a parent can intervene and control the child's TV viewing: (1) the amount or number of hours of television exposure; (2) the amount of viewing supervision (i.e., parental control of content); (3) parental coviewing of the child's television viewing; and (4) parent-child interaction, i.e., the frequency of intrafamily activities other than TV watching.

The high number of hours every day and every week students spend watching television appears to have measurable effects. While the statistics on how many hours students spend viewing television are disturbing, students' viewing habits have repercussions in other aspects of their lives. One study found that television viewing activities decreased the amount of time students and families spent on activities traditionally considered to be important to students' social and personal development. These data suggest that both parents and students need to learn to make more judicious use of their television viewing time. Recently, several separately initiated studies have been published, all of which support the position that parental interest should be aroused and that parental intervention could be a most effective tool available to either enhance or nullify the effects of television on students. Positive effects have been reported by families who participated in a study controlling their children's TV viewing time. Families had an increase in intrafamily activities and found that communication between all members of the family was increased and improved.

A number of studies indicated that adult co-viewing with the child can influence in a positive or a negative way the effects of TV on the child. Perhaps the earliest study to suggest this effect is one by Hicks (1968), in which an adult's comments (either positive or negative) about a program had an effect on the degree of aggression exhibited by children in a post-test situation. Those children who viewed the program with an adult who made positive comments about the aggressive action showed more aggression than those children who heard the adult making a negative evaluation of the aggressive action.

The literature supports the notion that parents and also other adults can affect what a child learns and retains from television content. Singer and Singer (1974) included in one of their treatment groups an adult who involved herself with the on-going TV program and who called the children's attention to specific points. The 3- and 4-year-olds in that group gained significantly more knowledge from the episodes of MISTER ROGERS they viewed than did other groups.

A study to further explore possible adult mediation on TV was recently completed by Corder-Bolz and O'Bryant (1978). Thirty-two pre-school students were randomly assigned in same-sex pairs to one of two experimental groups. The students watched an episode from the ADAM-12 series and the commercials used at the time the show was aired in the Spring of 1976. The ADAM-12 series is considered to be a family-hour program and is notable for its lack of violence and its orientation towards children. The particular show used was one which dealt with students being truant from school and subsequently getting into trouble.

In the first group, the pairs of students watched the 30-minute episode with a well-liked preschool teacher who made neutral comments about the program (e.g., "Let's sit here and watch a TV show."). In the second group, the pairs of students watched the same ADAM-12 episode with the same preschool teacher who made general explanatory comments (e.g., "Oh no! That boy is in trouble. He did not go to school when he was supposed to. He was playing hookey and that is bad."). The children who watched the program with the preschool teacher who talked about the program content showed a highly significant increase in their knowledge of specific details of the program, an increase in their general knowledge of truancy, a decrease in the erroneous knowledge of truancy,

and an increase in positive attitudes. These respective increases and decreases were still very much evident on a one-week post-test. These and other results are clear evidence that a parent or other significant adult can greatly influence what a student learns from television programs in terms of the amount of information, accuracy of information, and the direction of the student's attitudes.

A similar study indicated that significant adults could modify the effects of televised violence by talking about the program to a student while he or she viewed the program. In other studies, it was found that parental and adult discussion of a program with students and children could significantly increase the positive benefits and decrease the negative effects of watching a variety of television programs such as BARRETA and ALL IN THE FAMILY.

The positive effects of intervention while students are watching television programs have also been found in the classroom. Studies have found that teachers could significantly increase the instructional effects of education programs such as ELECTRIC COMPANY by helping the students understand the program. By explaining parts of the programs the students were not understanding and by asking questions to focus their attention, teachers were able to "customize" a television program to meet the specific needs of the particular students viewing the program.

Recently, research has shown that television itself can be used to assist and encourage students to view television more carefully and critically. The parental and teacher mediation studies have indicated that by asking questions, making explanatory comments, and directing students' attention to various aspects of a television program, students can be assisted in being more critical viewers. Similarly, Corder-Bolz (1978c) found that "inserts" in television programs, could assist and encourage students to be critical viewers. Sixty-second "inserts" in a BATMAN program explained that the program BATMAN is fun to watch but the character Batman is not real, and that in real life it is not legal to hit and hurt people. Students, after viewing the program, were less likely to endorse aggressive and violent behaviors to resolve conflicts.

O'Bryant and Corder-Bolz in Child Today (May, 1978) outlined six methods parents could use to make TV a positive part of children's lives.

1. *Limited Viewing.* Some of the negative aspects of TV are caused by the large number of hours children watch TV. Their academic development is endangered. The children get less exercise and less interaction with other children. Many parents have found that limiting their children's television viewing time to a total of one hour per day has had very beneficial effects.
2. *Content Control.* Conscientious parents don't let their children talk to strangers, yet many parents let their children watch TV freely with no restrictions. The content of television programming includes many topics which are inappropriate for the young children. Some of the negative effects of TV can be avoided by encouraging parents to monitor and control the kinds of programming their children watch.
3. *Purposeful Viewing.* Little thought is put into deciding whether or not to watch TV, or in choosing which program to watch. Some parents have found it beneficial to use TV for specific purposes.

These parents have decided that TV should not be just a part of the background noise. Instead, the TV is turned on to watch a particular program, and then turned off. The process of selecting particular programs can be an effective method through which parents communicate their own values to their children.

4. *Direct Mediation.* Children, especially young children, often do not understand the action that is portrayed in a TV program. These children acquire misleading and erroneous ideas from television. Parents need to talk to their children while viewing TV. When parents see something they like or don't like in a TV program, they can explain it to their children.
5. *Indirect Mediation.* Parents can help their children develop their own values, ideas, and aspirations by discussing the content of TV programs. However, with some children, an indirect mediation is more effective. Parents can discuss with each other while watching TV with their children what they like and don't like in the program and their reasons why. With this approach, the children aren't being "told" but are still being effectively exposed to the ideas and values which are important to the parents.
6. *Springboard Technique.* There are many issues which most parents want to discuss with each of their children. Issues such as cheating, stealing, and pre-marital sex are among those which parents need to talk about with their children. But it is often difficult to initiate such a discussion. However, TV programming offers almost the entire range of human problems. A TV program on the topic of theft can be used to initiate a father-son discussion on the issue of stealing. The TV program raised the issue and gained the son's interest. The parent can use this opening to talk in a natural manner about the various aspects of the issue.

Lemon (1976) presented several possible approaches to teaching Critical TV Viewing Skills. One major approach is discussion of the many issues related to television content and television viewing. The complex concept of reality as it applies to television content should be discussed with students. The different patterns of stereotyping should be discussed with students. Lemon indicates that "Parent/child co-viewing and mutual discussion is important . . . because parents are themselves a primary outside source of information." Exposure to magazines and newspapers including practice in discussing information from them can further help a student determine the extent of the realism of television programs. Lemon also suggests that parents and children need to learn "more about how and why television programs are produced and broadcast and then discuss what this suggests about the reality of program content."

In 1978, the U.S. Office of Education identified eight Critical TV Viewing Skills. They include the ability to . . .

1. distinguish program elements,
2. make judicious use of viewing time,
3. understand the psychological implications of advertising,
4. distinguish fact from fiction,
5. recognize and appreciate differing views,

6. understand content of dramatic presentations, public affairs, news and other television programming,
7. understand style of dramatic presentations, public affairs, news and other television programming,
8. understand relation between television programming and the printed word.

USOE let contracts for the development of curriculum materials to develop these skills.

However, care needs to be exercised in the development of a program to help students become more critical viewers of television. Some of these identified critical viewing skills are analogous to thinking and reasoning skills. Many schools in the late 1960s tried to accelerate the educational process by attempting to teach thinking skills directly. For the most part, these efforts failed. Thinking and reasoning skills appear to develop as a result of the maturation process. This process occurs through a variety of experiences by which students over an extended period of time can acquire abilities to perceive, reason, evaluate, and understand. Similarly, projects which have attempted to teach critical television viewing skills directly have not had much success. For example, a study funded by the Office of Child Development found unexpected difficulties in teaching critical viewing skills (Leifer, Graves, and Gordon, 1976). Critical viewing skills appear to be a combination of reasoning skills and television viewing habits. Therefore, the acquisition and regular use of critical viewing skills can be expected to require an extended period, maybe several years, of "training." The most fruitful approach appears to be the involvement of parents, teachers, and youth leaders. Parents and teachers, with appropriate materials and training, could assist and encourage students to acquire and use critical viewing skills. The parents' and teachers' involvement could occur over many months and thus increase the likelihood of success.

The data in this area clearly indicate that TV viewing can have undesirable effects on children in terms of stereotypes, aggressive behavior, separating fantasy from reality, academic achievement, role learning, and simply misunderstanding and confusion. But the literature also indicates that parents and other adults can have an impact on what children learn from television, especially with younger children.

Many of the problems apparently related to television programming and television viewing are a consequence of how students "consume" television. The effects upon television consumers can be perceived more clearly by comparing the impact of broadcast television upon the family with the impact of theater movies upon the family. At first glance, there does not appear to be much difference between the consequences of a movie and the consequences of a television show. In fact, many television shows are movies. Indeed, the psychological, educational, and communication research literatures often presume an equivalence between the effects of the two media upon viewing consumers. However, it is becoming apparent that a different kind of question about television should be raised. While television or specific kinds of television content may have important causal effects, these effects appear to involve a larger and more complex socialization process.

The effects of how families use movies may not be analogous at all to television. Families decide which movie to see; often this is a family decision resulting from considerable discussion. Parents, when taking children to

movies, will conscientiously consider the appropriateness of the content and how that content has been rated. Families, when offended or bored by a movie, will leave the theater and sometimes feel they have been cheated or spent their money unwisely. Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly, families will often discuss a movie critically after they have seen it.

Broadcast television, even though its content is similar to that of theater movies, is a different industry and has a different consumer-viewer format. Television is ever-present in most homes. Decisions to watch particular television programs are rarely articulated. In fact, the viewing of a particular television show is often an overt decision. Family members seldom leave the television set because they are offended or bored by a program. They rarely feel cheated for having spent their money unwisely. Furthermore, the content of a television program is rarely discussed critically. The consumer format of television raises some serious issues.

Parents now realize that television viewing has become a dominant part of their children's lives and that television programming plays a substantial role in children's social development. Researchers and scientists are becoming more aware that parents recognize the need for methods and controls for dealing with television, and also want definite suggestions and advice as to various techniques which would be useful to them. Several literatures suggest that there are methods by which parents and teachers can teach children to evaluate television and make its content applicable to their own lives. Parents and teachers can be trained in the use of various learning strategies and "games" which will enhance elementary school students' critical evaluation skills.

# *CRITICAL TV VIEWING RESOURCE LIST*

## *PUBLICATIONS FOR ELEMENTARY STUDENTS*

Angell, Judie. **And Now a Word from Our Sponsor or My Friend Alfred.** Bradbury Press, 1979. Delightful youngsters in New York set out to protect consumers from a dangerous drinking mug advertised on TV and end up challenging the whole world of TV advertising. For intermediate and junior high.

Beal, George. **See Inside a Television Studio.** Warwick Press, 1978. Good illustrations of a TV studio. For intermediate level.

Burns, Marilyn. **I am not a Short Adult! Getting Good at Being a Kid.** Yolla Bolly Press, 1977. Chapter 8 — "The TV Picture" gives a good overview of how television can and does influence children and their families. Written in a style children can understand. For intermediate level.

Byars, Betsy. **The TV Kid.** Viking Press, New York. A boy who lives in a fantasy world of TV shows is shocked back to reality. For intermediate and junior high.

Polk, Lee and Eda LeShan. **The Incredible Television Machine.** MacMillan Publishing Co., Inc., 1977. A good explanation of how the TV industry works. Excellent background information for adults, though written for intermediate and junior high. Chapter 6 presents a lively skit in which a search is made for the TV industry's "Most Important Person."

Rosen, Winifred. **Ralph Proves the Pudding.** Doubleday Publishing Co. Ralph stars in a TV commercial. For younger children.

Silverstein, Shel. "Jimmie Jet and His TV Set," **Where the Sidewalk Ends.** Harper and Row Publishers, Inc., 1974. A humorous poem about a boy who watches so much TV that he turns into one.

## *FILMS FOR ELEMENTARY STUDENTS*

**Anchor Man.** (CBS TV) (15 min.) from CBS Films, 485 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10022. About news anchorman Walter Cronkite and the filming of TV news.

**The Electronic Rainbow: Television.** (23 min.) from Pyramid Films. How television has developed, how it works, and how it is used.

**Frame by Frame: The Art of Animation.** (13 min.) from Pyramid Films. Box 1048, Santa Monica, CA 90406. A simple approach to filmmaking.

**How to Watch TV.** Xerox Education Publications, 1250 Fairwood Ave., P. O. Box 444, Columbus, OH 43216. (Four strips, 7-8 min. each) "News and Documentaries", "Drama and Comedy", "Advertising", and "Learning from Television". For Grade 5 and up.

**Seeing Through Commercials** (15 min.) from Vision Films, P. O. Box 48896, Los Angeles, CA 90048. Techniques of selling.

**The Six Billion $$$ Sell** (15 min.) Consumer Report Films, Box FF-3, 256 Washington St., Mount Vernon, NY 10055. Child's guide to TV commercials.

**TV: Behind the Screen** (15½ min.) from Churchill Films. How TV shows are made.

**A TV Guide: Thinking About What We Watch** (17 min.) from Churchill Films, 662 No. Robertson Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90069. Examines stereotypes and other misinformation found in shows and commercials.

## *PUBLICATIONS FOR TEACHERS AND PARENTS*


Arlen, Michael. **Living Room War.** Viking Press, 625 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10022 .

Barnouw, Erik. **Tube of Plenty: The Evolution of American Television.** Oxford University Press, 16-00 Pollitt Dr., Fair Lawn, NJ 07410.

Berger, Arthur, **The TV-Guided American.** Walker & Co., 720 Fifth Ave., New York, NY 10019.

Committee on Children and Television. **Children and Television: A General Bibliography.** 1511 Masonic Ave., San Francisco, CA 94117. The Committee also publishes a newsletter.

Fireman, Judy. **The TV Book.** Workman Publishing Co., Inc., 231 E. 51st Street, New York, NY 10022.

Gill, Nancy. "**TV & Kids:** What One Teacher Has Done," *Learning*, October 1979, pp. 46-47.

Goldstein, Arnold P. and Leonard Krasner, eds. **The Early Window: Effects of Television on Children and Youth.** Pergamon International Library, Pergamon Press, Inc., Maxwell House, Fairview Park, Elmsford, NY 10523. A summary of the research translated.

Kahn, Linda. "A Practical Guide to Critical TV Viewing Skills," *Learning*, October 1979, pp. 32-34, 90-92.

Kahn, Linda. "TV & Kids: What You Can Do," *Learning*, October 1979, pp. 47-49.

Kay, Evelyn. **The Family Guide to Children's Television: What to Watch, What to Miss, What to Chance, and How to Do It.** Panther Books, Inc., 201 E. 50th Street, New York, NY 10022.

Larrick, Nancy. "TV and Kids: What Teachers Are Complaining About," *Learning*, October 1979, pp. 44-46.

Lefkowitz, Eron, Walder, and Huesmann. **Growing Up to Be Violent.** Pergamon Press, 1977, Maxwell House, Fairview Park, Elmsford, NY 10523.

Lesser, Gerald S. **Children and Television: Lessons from Sesame Street.** Random House, 201 E. 50th Street, New York, NY 10022.

Mankiewicz, Frank and Joel Swerdlow. **Remote Control: Television and the Manipulation of American Life.** New York Times Books, a division of the New York Times, distributed by Harper and Row, Keystone Industrial Park, Scranton, PA 18512 .

Newcomb, Horace, ed. **The Critical View of Television.** Oxford University Press, New York.

Noble, Grant. **Children in Front of the Small Screen.** Sage Publications, 275 So. Beverly Drive, Beverly Hills, CA 90212.

Potter, Rosemary. **New Season: The Positive Use of Commercial Television with Children.** Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., Columbus, OH 45216.

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Schramm, Wilbur, Jack Lyle, and Edwin B. Parker. **Television in the Lives of our Children.** Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA.

**The Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior,** U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

**Teachers' Guides to Television,** Teachers' Guides Co., Teachers' Guides to Television, 699 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10021.

Winn, Marie. **The Plug-In Drug.** Viking Press, 1977, 625 Madison Ave., New York, NY 10022.

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# *SEDL MATERIALS TO TEACH CRITICAL TV VIEWING SKILLS*

## *TEACHER CUE CARDS*

**Objectives and Critical Viewing Skills Presented:**
To mesh critical viewing skills practice with teachers' curriculum goals; to increase awareness of TV programming content and style; to teach discrimination of programming details essential to comprehension; to encourage evaluation of what is viewed.

| | |
|---|---|
| **Distinguishing Program Elements** | Many cards deal with discriminatory use of music, color, sets, scene changes, and other production elements. |
| **Understanding Psychological Implication of Advertising** | Some cards call for analysis of commercial messages, target audience, intent, and vocabulary. Students are required to infer conclusions about the nature of commercials in discussion questions. |
| **Distinguishing Fact From Fantasy** | Several CUE CARDS require students to distinguish realistic portrayals from non-realistic. Distinctions between impossible/possible actions, as well as recognition of characterization and plot distortions are called for. |

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| **Understanding Style of Dramatic Presentations, Public Affairs, News, and Other Programming** | CUE CARDS call for distinguishing stylistic elements of programming. (e.g. "How are 'bad guys' portrayed?") |
| **Understanding Content of Dramatic Presentations, Public Affairs, News, and Other Programming** | CUE CARDS call for distinction of details necessary to plot comprehension, as well as discussion of news, weather, and debate programs' content and meaning. |
| **Recognizing and Appreciating Differing Views** | Students are asked to make critical judgements and defend their positions; debate is introduced, contrast between TV "portrayals" vs. "real" counterparts is explored. |
| **Making Judicious Use of Viewing Time** | Various cards feature compilation and evaluation of amount and type of student viewing |
| **Understanding Relationship Between TV Programming and the Printed Word** | The relationship between scripts and programming is featured in several cards; students are asked to compare "the TV version" with the written version of biographies, news, etc. |

**Rationale:**

The SEDL staff felt that, in order to insure use of critical TV viewing skills' curriculum by teachers, it would be necessary to create an innovative and simple support system, rather than another separate curriculum for already over-burdened teachers.

Therefore, TEACHER CUE CARDS were purposefully designed to teach existing curriculum concurrently with critical TV viewing skills. Teachers are encouraged to make use of their students' viewing habits and experiences to meet their own curriculum goals. By treating television as an educational resource, SEDL encourages teachers to utilize it in the classroom.

Bearing in mind the grade levels include in the projects target audience, many of the exercises and activities are on a basic level, such as cards requiring simple counting and use of the alphabet. Others teach vocabulary, current events, weather, and math. Suggested discussion questions require children to draw inference from these exercises and make judgements based on the data they have been asked to compile. In addition, all TEACHER CUE CARDS call for attentive discrimination of detail and subsequent appraisal, enhancing critical viewing skills' goals. In this way, content viewed on TV can be used by the teacher as a springboard to discuss or enrich the subject in the classroom, thus encouraging teacher use of the materials.

# *STUDENT MATERIALS*

## THE FROG FABLES

### 1. "SEE-MORE FINDS A FRIEND"

The objectives are to help young children have a more realistic view of TV, to create an awareness of TV as a potential way to see more of the world, to stimulate curiosity about TV, and to increase general knowledge of TV.

**Synopsis.** See-More, a curious green frog, leaves home to see more of the world and learns about TV. See-More meets a fish, appropriately named Tuner-Fish, who is addicted to TV watching. Seeing TV for the first time, the curious frog questions how the pictures get into the box. See-More decides to learn more about TV before watching further.

**Critical TV Viewing Skills Presented.**

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| **Making Judicious Use of Viewing Time** | Discusses "play time" vs. "TV time" for Tuner-Fish and suggests planned viewing. |
| **Recognizing and Appreciating Differing Views** | See-More's view of TV as a window on the world is explored. The story presents differing views and uses of television by Tuner-Fish, Ali the cat, and the TV technicians. |

**Research Basis.** Studies indicate that children take television and its programming for granted as part of their everyday lives. Thus, they tend not to question programming origins. Research also indicates that both parents and children frequently misjudge the amount of time spent viewing TV.

**Rationale.** See-More's curious character is designed to re-awaken children to the wonder of television and the world around them. By contrasting See-More's desire to "find out where TV comes from" with Tuner's passive acceptance of programming, children's curiosity is stimulated.

### 2. "SEE-MORE FINDS OUT THE FACTS"

The objectives are to familiarize students with the process of making TV programs and commercials and to create an awareness that TV programming is planned and produced rather than being real life.

**Synopsis.** See-More Frog engages in several adventures and misadventures in the big city while attempting to find out about TV. The curious frog visits a TV studio, discovering where and how TV programs and commercials are made. See-More learns about the equipment and people involved in producing a TV program and discovers that TV programs and commercials rely upon planned scripts.

**Critical TV Viewing Skills Presented.**

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|---|---|
| **Distinguishing Program Elements** | See-More finds out how a TV program is produced. |
| **Understanding Psychological Implications of Advertising** | See-More finds out the purpose of commercials and how they are made. |
| **Distinguishing Fact From Fantasy** | See-More learns about acting. |

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| **Understanding Style of Dramatic Presentations, Public Affairs, News, and Other Programming** | See-More learns about audiences and game shows. |
| **Understanding the Relation Between TV Programming and the Printed Word** | See-More learns about scripts and writers and their purpose. |

**Research Basis.** Studies indicate that very young children generally are unaware of "how people get in the TV." At later ages, children remain unfamiliar with sets, scripts, writers, cameras, actors, and commercials. This story supplies basic information on TV production.

**Rationale.** The character of See-More as a curious frog who braves danger in the city to find out about TV is further developed in an adventure format.

### 3. "TUNER'S TUNE-IN GUIDE"

The objectives are to increase students' awareness and knowledge of TV program formats, and to suggest the value of planning and using TV viewing time wisely.

**Synopsis.** Deciding to explore the possibilities of TV viewing, See-More discovers different kinds of TV shows in the TV program listings. See-More relates what he has learned to Tuner and points out the value of planned, selective TV watching. Tuner-Fish begins to realize the value of planning his TV time.

**Critical TV Viewing Skills Presented.**

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| **Making Judicious Use of Viewing Time** | See-More alerts Tuner to the variety of viewing possibilities and the value of planned viewing. |
| **Distinguising Fact From Fantasy** | Tuner learns the differences between documentary and fiction, news, and westerns, etc. |
| **Understanding Content of Dramatic Presentations, Public Affairs, News, and Other Programming** | Tuner learns the difference in content of different shows. |
| **Understanding Style of Dramatic Presentations, Public Affairs, News, and Other Programming** | Tuner learns about different shows and their styles of presentation. |

**Research Basis.** According to several studies, children generally tend to watch only a few types of shows in an unplanned manner.

**Rationale.** See-More's excitement and desire to share what he has learned with Tuner is the vehicle to teach children about different types of shows. Planning viewing time is stated as advantageous so that children may watch different types of shows as well as have time to play. In this way, the message is put in nonmoralizing terms.

## *THE SUZIE STORIES*

### 4. "SUZIE'S BROKEN TV"

The objectives are to increase students' awareness of alternative activities to TV viewing, to encourage judicious use of TV viewing time, and to model the possible favorable outcomes of turning off the TV.

**Synopsis.** Suzie and her family are forced to find other pastimes while their TV set is in the repair shop. Suzie rediscovers bike riding, tree climbing and visiting with her neighbors. The family rediscovers taking walks, going to movies, reading, and after-dinner games. When the TV set is repaired, Suzie and her family decide to continue their new activities and to be more selective in their TV viewing.

**Critical TV Viewing Skills Presented.**

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|---|---|
| **Making Judicious Use of Viewing Time** | Suzie and her family rediscover family activities and other alternatives to TV viewing. |
| **Distinguishing Fact From Fantasy** | Suzie contrasts what Wonder Woman can do vs. what she can; what the Waltons do after dinner with what her family does. |

**Research Basis.** In general, children and families do not realize how much of their time is taken up by routine TV watching and how many family-oriented or social activities they have given up.

**Rationale.** The purpose of this and other SUZIE STORIES is to model changing of viewing habits. The idea of spending family time together in ways other than watching TV is presented in an attractive light. Research indicates that families tend to become heavy TV viewers through lack of awareness. Increasing awareness may lead to more selective viewing habits.

### 5. "SUZIE MAKES THE MENU"

The objectives are to increase students' awareness of psychological implications of advertising, to increase awareness of non-nutritional food commercials directed toward children, and to model critical evaluation of commercials.

**Synopsis.** Suzie plans a day's meals for her family, choosing from food commercials she sees on TV. She becomes overwhelmed by the commercials and it isn't until the TV is turned off that she realizes that her menu, made up of foods from TV commercials, is *not* nutritionally balanced. With her mother's guidance, she decides to make her own menu after all.

**Critical TV Viewing Skills Presented.**

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| **Understanding Psychological Implications of Advertising** | TV commercials influence Suzie when she is hungry; attractive style of commercials is compared with other announcements. |
| **Recognizing and Appreciating Differing Views** | Suzie learns the difference between commercials and public service announcements. |

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|---|---|
| **Understanding Content and Style of Dramatic Presentations, Public Affairs, News, and Other Programming** | Commercials vs. public service announcements. |

**Research Basis.** Studies on children and TV advertising indicate:

a) children respond most to food commercials when they are hungry;
b) children most often request products portrayed as "fun" in commercials;
c) children younger than the age of roughly seven or eight cannot distinguish between commercials and programs and do not recognize the purpose of commecials.

**Rationale:** Children can identify with Suzie, who is an average child overwhelmed by TV commercials. Portraying the results of commercials' influence on Suzie in a humorous way points out the possible outcome of choosing foods only by commercial. Commercial intent is also contrasted with public service announcement intent. The value of "thinking for yourself" is stressed.

### 6. "FAMOUS SUZIE"

The objectives are to increase students' knowledge of TV news and its dependence on other media, to suggest ways of checking TV news accuracy, and to model critical viewing.

**Synopsis.** Suzie is interviewed for a TV news show when she wins a poster contest. During the news broadcast, she discovers that TV interviews and filming are planned, but that they are affected by unplanned occurrences such as fires. She is annoyed that her interview is cut short. In discussion with her parents, Suzie learns about editing and other aspects of TV news production.

**Critical TV Viewing Skills Presented.**

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| **Distinguising Program Elements** | TV news' emphasis on visual stories and reliance on videotape. |
| **Distinguishing Fact From Fantasy** | Suzie protests the staging of her interview and its portrayal on TV news as "what really happened." |
| **Recognizing and Appreciating Differing Views** | Suzie learns about the varying importance of TV news stories to different viewers. |
| **Understanding the Content of Dramatic Presentations, Public Affairs, News, and Other Programming** | Suzie notes news symbols for "economy," "peace talks," strikes, etc. |
| **Understanding Style of Dramatic Presentations, Public Affairs, News, and Other Programming** | Suzie learns about style of TV news presentations. She recognizes her own interest in visually exciting stories, such as the fire. |
| **Understanding the Relation Between TV Programming and the Printed Word** | The dependence of TV news on print and the ability to cross-check TV news with the newspaper are discussed. |

**Research Basis.** Children's lack of interest in the news and their inattention to it is frequently commented upon in research literature. Also,

children are generally unaware of industry and time constraints on news reporting and concepts such as editing.

**Rationale.** Most children would become very excited if they were interviewed by a TV reporter. They would watch the TV news to see themselves. Suzie's vague comprehension of TV news content and her chagrin that her story is cut short offers the vehicle by which to transmit much information about TV news production and its tendency to expend much broadcast time on stories which are easy to present visually. Children can identify with Suzie, and her asking questions provides children with a model of critical TV viewing.

### 7. "TONY LOOKS AT FAMILIES"

The objectives are to model critical TV viewing, to encourage critical evaluation of TV content, and to increase awareness of TV distortions.

**Synopsis.** While watching TV, Tony wonders why he doesn't see families like his own. He asks an adult neighbor who cares for him after school what a "housekeeper" is, and why his mother doesn't have a housekeeper. In addition, Tony questions why there are not families like his. Finally, Tony realizes that it is not the size of the family that is important or how much money a family has. Rather, how they feel about each other is the important factor that make a family.

**Critical TV Viewing Skills Presented.**

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|---|---|
| **Distinguishing Fact From Fantasy** | Tony questions TV's protrayal of big families and of single-parent families. |
| **Recognizing and Appreciating Differing Points of View** | Tony sees TV's portrayal of what is desirable as to family structure and behavior contrasted with his own family. |
| **Understanding Content of Dramatic Presentations, Public Affairs, News, and Other Programming** | Tony learns to see hidden messages in TV content. |
| **Understanding Relation Between TV Programming and the Printed Word** | Tony learns about scripts. |

**Research Basis.** Content analysis of current TV programming reveals a general tendency to emphasize middle-class two-parent families. There are only a few portrayals of single-parent families.

**Rationale.** Despite statistics showing a growing number of single-parent families, the majority of television programs about families concern a large, intact, middle-class family. Since children sometimes feel that TV portrayals picture the way one should live or behave, they may not feel positively about their own families. Thus, they have difficulty identifying with favored TV characters and justifying their own situation. Through discussion with his mother, Tony learns that every family does not have to be like the families on television. The story models the evaluating of the reality of TV portrayals and the expression of family values as superior to TV values.

## 8. "JUANA GOES SHOPPING"

The objectives are to increase awareness of advertising, to encourage evaluation of commercials, and to model consumer decision-making based on commercials.

**Synopsis.** Juana and Rudy have a dilemma as to what to buy their mother for a Christmas present. Then they see a TV commercial for a kitchen gadget "on special sale." They pool their money and go to buy the article. There they meet a friend who tells them his mother did not like the gadget. Juana and Rudy inspect the product carefully and agree to decide for themselves what would make a good present after comparison shopping.

**Critical TV Viewing Skills Presented.**

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|---|---|
| **Understanding Psychological Implications of Advertising** | Juana and Rudy are influenced by a product on "special sale"; and by commercial representation of the product as being a good gift. |
| **Recognizing and Appreciating Differing Views** | Juana and Rudy consider whether their mother would feel that a product is a good gift because a commercial says so. |

**Research Basis.** Research indicates children are easily influenced by television advertising; commercials of certain types of products appear to be directed specifically towards children looking for gift choices at certain times of the year.

**Rationale.** Children are often attracted to gadgets and are easily persuaded by TV commercials. The story is designed to present alternate sources of information as a basis for a buying decision.

## 9. "A COWBOY COMES TO DINNER"

The objectives are to model critical viewing, to explain some origins of and reasons for TV stereotypes, to increase awareness of TV distortions, and to clarify the difference between historical accuracy on TV and modern life.

**Synopsis.** Jason comes to Jennifer's house for dinner. While watching TV, an old Western movie comes on in which all Indians are depicted as bad. Jennifer becomes angry and turns off the TV, and Jason is indignant at the unfairness of the movie. Mrs. Redbird explains why writers are not concerned about fairness in script writing sometimes. She states that, even when trying to be fair, script writers may make mistakes about Indians and other ethnic groups. She advises that everyone should question whether a TV portrayal is truthful if the story presents only one side.

Everyone sits down to dinner, but Jason is apprehensive because of a documentary about Indians he has seen. He is relieved when dinner is roast beef, and confesses he was afraid it might be dog. Jennifer is annoyed but Mrs. Redbird laughs. She explains that while it is an accurate historical fact that the Sioux considered dog a treat, she and

Jennifer were not Sioux. Also, she explains that dietary habits have changed in the last 150 years. Jason apologizes and Jennifer confesses she thought he might ask for beans because he is a cowboy. Jasons states he hates beans. and the story ends on a good-humored note.

**Critical TV Viewing Skills Presented.**

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|---|---|
| **Distinguishing Program Elements** | Jennifer and Jason learn about writers' intent in TV shows. |
| **Distinguishing Fact From Fantasy** | A distinction is made between documentaries and fiction. |
| **Recognizing and Appreciating Differing Views** | Jason learns an Indian point of view; Jennifer learns about a TV writers' and settler's points of view. |
| **Understanding Content of Dramatic Presentations, Public Affairs, News, and Other Programming** | Critical viewing of story and underlying message by Jason and Jennifer; how documentaries may mislead; the role of research in accuracy of TV shows. |
| **Understanding Relation Between TV Programming and the Printed Word** | Jason and Jennifer learn about scripts and how they are used. |

**Research Basis.** Children often are unaware of subtle undertones of TV programming. Additionally, they generally do not question historical accuracy of TV shows and movies.

**Rationale.** Studies in the field of social learning indicate that children tend to believe TV's information when they lack another source. It seems reasonable, then, that modern-day cowboys and Indians would have strange misconceptions about each other. Therefore, the point is made about distortions of historical events and the difference between accurate historical statements and modern life. Further, the point is made that a good way to identify distortions is to observe whether a TV story seems one-sided.

## *TV FROG LOG*

The objectives are to increase awareness of amount of type of viewing, to increase knowledge of available types of programming, to encourage evaluation of how viewing time is spent, and to increase family interaction about viewing and planning.

**Critical TV Viewing Skills Presented.**

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| **Making Judicious Use of Viewing Time** | Children are asked to plan their weeks' viewing time in advance with the help of their parents. |
| **Understanding the Style of Dramatic Presentations, Public Affairs, News and Other Programming** | Symbols for different types of programs are presented on the chart. Students are to identify the type of program they have chosen, and draw in the symbol for it. |

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| **Understanding Relation Between TV Programming and the Printed Word** | Children must use newspapers and TV program guides to find out what programs are scheduled. |

**Research Basis.** Research findings reveal that both parents and children frequently misjudge the amount of actual time they spend viewing TV. According to several studies, children generally tend to watch only a few *types* of shows and this viewing is in an unplanned manner. Also studies have shown that parental guidance in selective and controlled viewing has a positive impact on the effects of TV on children as well as on family interaction.

**Rationale.** To create awareness of actual time spent in TV viewing and to encourage planned and selective viewing, a simple and attractive chart was devised which would encourage children and their parents to use it. The TV FROG LOG has simple instructions for its use. It can be used alone or to reinforce the skills taught in "TUNER'S TUNE IN GUIDE". Besides teaching planned TV viewing, its use incidentally teaches reading and writing.

## *THE TV DISCOVERY GAME*

The objectives are to increase awareness of program details, to increase knowledge of program formats and styles, and to encourage evaluation of what is being viewed.

**Critical TV Viewing Skills Presented.**

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|---|---|
| **Distinguishing Program Elements** | Questions require identification of various program elements such as scenery, time and weather changes. |
| **Understanding Psychological Implications of Advertising** | One set of cards asks questions about commercials being shown, i.e. "Who is this product for?" |
| **Recognizing and Appreciating Differing Views** | Some questions ask if families portrayed in the program are similar to the child's, etc. |
| **Understanding Content and Style of Dramatic Presentations, Public Affairs, News, and Other Programming** | Questions require identification of details necessary to comprehension of plot and style. |

**Research Basis.** Studies indicate that children take television and its programming for granted and thus do not question programming origins, motivations, or expressions of fantasy as reality. They also have difficulty following a storyline. Other studies show that young children cannot distinguish well between programs and commercials and do not recognize the purpose of commercials.

**Rationale.** In order to encourage a questioning approach to TV viewing, a game board was developed for elementary students to be played while watching TV. By answering questions which call for attention to detail, students' awareness of programming elements is increased. By answering questions which call for value judgements, a student is forced to choose the perceived "right" answer. Parental intervention in judging right or wrong answers is important to nullify or enhance the effects of TV on children.

# *FAMILY MATERIALS*

## *TELEVISION: A FAMILY FOCUS*

**1. "FOR PARENTS ONLY . . . LEARNING TO USE TV"**

The objectives are to increase awareness of the prevalence of TV and its influence on family life, and to suggest ways to make TV a positive experience in the family.

**Synopsis.** Television is such a part of American life that many do not give it a second thought, yet it has great impact upon family life. Direct mediation, indirect mediation, and the springboard technique are ways of watching TV with children to insure that parents play an active rather than passive part in TV viewing. Controlled content, selective viewing, and limited viewing constitute the what, why, and when of TV viewing. These are suggested to parents as reasonable approaches to use with children to establish good viewing habits. Talking with children about TV is further emphasized by the children's story, *Suzie's History Lesson.* Subjects discussed include animation, the economics of the TV industry, dramatic conventions, and details specific to historical eras. Children are encouraged to look beyond what they see.

**Critical TV Viewing Skills Presented.**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Distinguishing Program Elements** | TV Bingo Game encourages children to look for specific elements in television programming. |
| **Making Judicious Use of Viewing Time** | *Selective Viewing, the Why of TV Viewing* and *Limited Viewing . . . The When of Television* encourage families to make judicious use of viewing time. |
| **Understanding the Style and Content of Program Formats** | *Children's Story Time: Suzie's History Lesson* explains how cartoons are made, dramatic conventions, and provides a good example of parental mediation. |

**Research Basis.** Many parents are unaware of the potential impact of TV upon children. Furthermore, many studies on family use of television and the influence of TV on family life have found that children learn more from TV if an adult mediates their viewing by explaining what is happening or making a few comments at appropriate places.

**Rationale.** The effects of television on the family have only been focused upon in recent years by popular press. Families are only beginning to become aware of the influence of TV upon family life. Little has been done to encourage them to make changes and to give them ideas for instituting those changes. SEDL staff approach is to create awareness and to provide solutions to problems without making parents feel guilty about what they are not doing or what they should be doing. Recognizing there are several parenting styles, SEDL has attempted to provide positive and useful ideas from which parents may choose.

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## 2. "WHAT IS YOUR PRIME TIME?"

The objectives are to increase awareness of the amount of time a family spends watching TV, to help families determine relative importance of TV viewing within the family, and to help families set priorities for family activities.

**Synopsis.** There is only so much time available in life. Many things compete for time and attention. TV often has the loudest voice. Most families have no idea how much time is spent watching TV in their home. Some people even feel they have very little control over TV in their lives. The activity diary and stories provide a useful way of examining what is happening to a family's time.

**Critical TV Viewing Skills Presented.**

**Making Judicious Use of Viewing Time.** The section for adults, along with the *Quick Quiz* and the insert, call attention to the amount of viewing a family does. Families are encouraged to compare activities they engage in with what they would like to do, thereby establishing priorities for use of time. The Suzie story, THE BROKEN TV, and the discussion questions call attention to the importance of other activities besides TV viewing.

**Understanding Style and Content of Dramatic Presentations, Public Affairs, News, and Other Programming** The *Search and Circle* section for children focuses upon different kinds of television programs.

**Research Basis.** Studies on family use of TV show that parents frequently underestimate the amount of time that they and their children spend watching TV. Assessment instruments or diaries of TV viewing have proved to be useful in establishing awareness of and change in TV habits.

**Rationale.** Again, the object in presenting the family materials is to create an awareness, but not to make parents feel guilty. Parents are encouraged to feel that they do indeed have control of their lives and the lives of their children. Useful approaches are given for gaining control of their time. *The Homemaker's Ode to Television* represents one way TV is used in some American homes.

## 3. "LEARNING FROM TV"

The objectives are to present the idea that children learn from their total environment, of which TV is a major part, to note that what is learned is sometimes accurate and sometimes misinterpreted, to establish the idea that TV can be a positive or negative teacher, depending upon the use made of it, and to encourage families to make TV a positive influence in their children's lives, an educational resource by guiding their use of TV.

**Synopsis.** Children learn from TV but what they learn may not be accurate. Parental comments do a lot toward helping them understand concepts presented on TV and the real world. Properly used, TV can be

an exciting educational resource. It can be as useful as the family chooses to make it.

**Critical TV Viewing Skills Presented.**

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| **Distinguishing Program Elements** | The *TV Bingo* game in the children's activities focuses attention on details often overlooked, such as camera angles and shots, music, kinds of TV programs, etc. |
| | *Really Suzie* notes the details that appear in commercials often misconstrued by children. She learns about sets, costuming, and acting. |
| **Understanding the Psychological Implications of Advertising** | *Really Suzie* teaches the purpose of commercials and that they do not always portray life accurately. |
| **Distinguishing Fact from Fantasy** | Suzie notices the differences between TV portrayals and people she knows. |

**Research Basis.** Research evaluating *Sesame Street* revealed that children whose mothers watched with them learned significantly more than those who watched alone. Studies have shown that very young children cannot distinguish between commercial and regular programming. Parents can be helpful in making that determination.

**Rationale.** Many families see little educational value in TV, rather they see it as strictly a form of entertainment. Even the negative aspects of TV viewing can be used positively if adults take time to interject a few comments about their values and why they feel the way they do about things they see on TV.

## 4. "COPING WITH COMMERCIALS"

The objectives are to create an awareness among parents of ways in which children perceive commercials; to help parents help children interpret the purpose of commercials correctly; to point out how eating habits are influenced by TV; and to help parents and children understand selling techniques.

**Synopsis.** Parents are often not aware of the effects of commercials on children. Many children do not have sufficient maturity to understand that the purpose of a commercial is to sell a product. Parents can teach children the purpose of commercials and the persuasive techniques used. Family activities suggest ways to help children become more critical viewers of TV commercials. The story, "Suzie's Salesman Makes a Sale," helps children understand sales techniques.

**Critical TV Viewing Skills Presented.**

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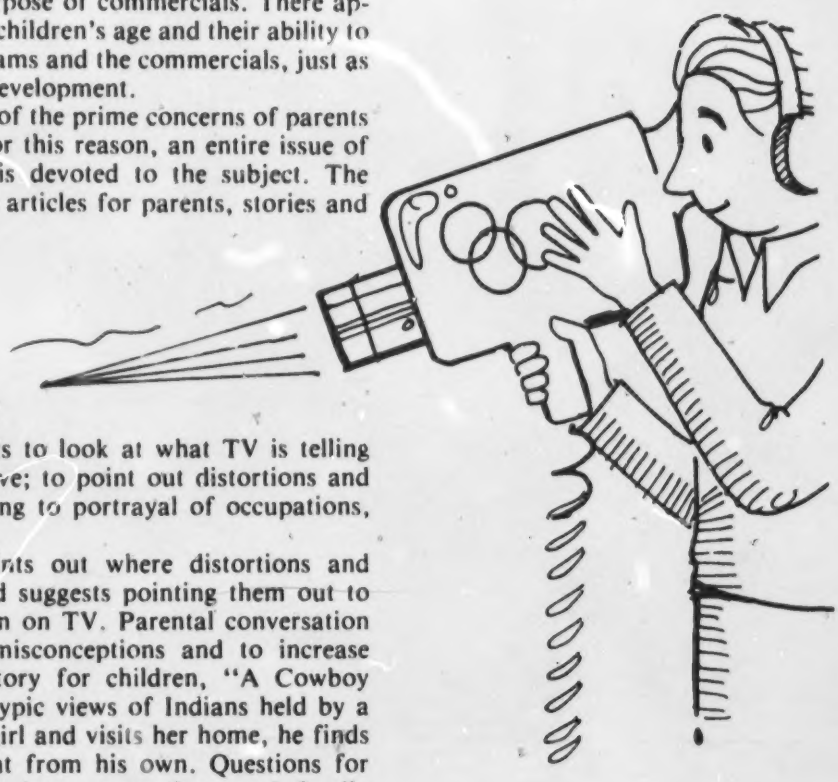
| **Understanding the Psychological Implications of Advertising** | The purpose of commercials and selling techniques are covered in detail. |

**Research Basis.** Studies show that before the age of 8, children have difficulty differentiating between TV commercials and programs. They do not seem to be able to understand the purpose of commercials. There appears to be a definite relationship between children's age and their ability to tell the difference between television programs and the commercials, just as there is between age and general cognitive development.

**Rationale.** Commercials seem to be one of the prime concerns of parents in dealing with children and television. For this reason, an entire issue of "TELEVISION: A FAMILY FOCUS" is devoted to the subject. The format follows the other issues, providing articles for parents, stories and activities for the children.



**5. "PUTTING TV IN PERSPECTIVE"**

The objectives are to encourage parents to look at what TV is telling children about the world in which they live; to point out distortions and stereotypes that occur, especially pertaining to portrayal of occupations, sex roles, and family life.

**Synopsis.** The article for parents points out where distortions and stereotypes are likely to occur on TV and suggests pointing them out to children. Much of real life is never shown on TV. Parental conversation with children can do much to dispell misconceptions and to increase understanding of the real world. The story for children, "A Cowboy Comes to Dinner," deals with the stereotypic views of Indians held by a rancher's son. When he meets an Indian girl and visits her home, he finds that the life she leads is not too different from his own. Questions for family activities provide further insights into occupations and family portrayals on TV. The Search and Circle section concentrates on TV vocabulary.

**Critical TV Viewing Skills Presented.**

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|---|---|
| **Distinguishing Fact From Fantasy** | The unreal portrayal of most occupations, sex roles, and family life is noted. |
| **Recognizing and Appreciating Differing Views** | Attention is called to the different structures of the family in the United States. |

**Research Basis.** Studies have revealed that children get most of their occupational information from TV. Since only six out of ten characters have an identifiable occupation and one out of four is shown in the field of life protection, and the majority are played by men, they may be getting the wrong ideas about jobs.

**Rationale.** Since children have a difficult time distinguishing between fact and fantasy, and the incidental information presented on TV is not always an accurate portrayal of real life, an entire issue concentrates on these problems. It is hoped that parents can be made aware of distortions and stereotypes and will point them out to children. In this way, even misinformation and distortion can be used in an educational way.

## CRITICAL TV VIEWING SKILLS CONCEPTS

| PRESENTED IN: | | Distinguish Program Elements | Make Judicious Use of Viewing Time | Understand Psychological Implications of Advertising | Distinguish Fact From Fantasy | Recognize and Appreciate Differing Views | Understand Content of Dramatic Presentations, Public Affairs, News, and Other Programming | Understand Style of Dramatic Presentations, Public Affairs, News, and Other Programming | Understand Relation Between TV Programming and the Printed Word |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| FROG FABLES | See-More Finds A Friend | X | X | | | X | | | |
| | See-More Finds Out The Facts | X | | X | X | | | X | X |
| | Tuner's Tune-In Guide | | X | | X | | X | X | |
| SUZIE STORIES | Suzie's Broken TV | | X | | X | | | | |
| | Suzie Makes The Menu | X | | X | | X | X | | |
| | Famous Suzie | X | | | X | X | X | X | X |
| SPECIAL AUDIENCES | Juana Goes Shopping | | | X | X | X | | | |
| | Tony Looks at Families | | | | X | X | X | | X |
| | A Cowboy Comes to Dinner | X | | | X | X | X | | X |
| GAMES & CHARTS | TV Frog Log | | X | | | | | X | X |
| | TV Discovery Game | X | | X | | X | X | | |
| FAMILY MATERIALS | For Parents Only Learning to Use TV | X | X | | | | X | X | |
| | What is Your Prime Time? | | X | | | | X | X | |
| | Learning From TV | X | | X | X | | | | |
| | Coping with Commercials | | | X | | | | | |
| | Putting TV In Perspective | | | | X | X | | | |

Dr. Charles R. Corder-Bolz
Director, Learning and Media Research
Southwest Educational Development Laboratory
211 E. Seventh Street
Austin, TX 78701

Dear Dr. Corder-Bolz:

This is to inform you that I conducted a Critical Television Viewing Skills Workshop

(date)_____

(place)_____

(length of workshop)_____

(group or organization)_____

(number attending)_____ _____

(who attended - parents, teachers, etc.)_____

(any additional comments)_____

_____

_____

Enclosed are handouts/publicity used in conjunction with the workshop.

Sincerely,

Address: